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An ecological study of the family system-child relationship.

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AN ECOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE FAMILY SYSTEM-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

A Dissertation Presented

By

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To my family

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I am deeply indebted to the members of the 12 families who allowed me to share in their lives. It was a privilege for me to experience family life as it occurred in these families. Their cooperation have made this dissertation possible. To protect them, their names have been changed.

ABSTRACT

An Ecological Study of the Family
System-Child Relationship

(August, 1980)

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Twelve non-clinic, intact families (parents married for the first time and living in the same house) with preschool children were studied. Families represented diverse SES, educational and ethnic backgrounds. Four families were working-class, five families were middle-class, and three families were upper-middle-class. Data were collected over a 10 month period via task oriented activities (semi-structured interviews, the Family Life Space Drawing, and a family project), naturalistic observations of mother-child interaction, and naturalistic observations of the entire family. All sessions were conducted in the homes of families and were audiotaped. The final session was videotaped.

Analyzation of the data revealed four family-level tasks as being central to the organization of the family system-child relationship. The young child was observed establishing relationships with family members at the level of interpersonal subsystems and at the level of the family unit subsystem. Two additional tasks were observed operating at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. One task was that of resolving separateness and connectedness ("Iness" versus "Weness"). The final task entailed developing and validating

personal subsystem images as well as images of "Iness" and "Weness." The family system-child relationship was defined as the interface of three subsystems in the family: personal subsystem (individual family members), interpersonal subsystems (dyadic and polyadic relationships), and the family unit subsystems (all family members living in the household).

As witnessed and reported in this dissertation, when the young child's family system, rather than specific parent-child relationships, became the research focus, new and qualitatively different psychosocial variables, other than those traditionally reported in the parent-child and child development literature, were uncovered. The data collected clearly showed that the young child's relationship with the family system was more complex than what has been outlined in current parent-child conceptual frameworks. The children in the 12 families studied were not simply involved in dyadic, parent-child relationships. Rather, transactions between and among children and adults were embedded in a multidimensional family system.

The children in the families studied functioned in a variety of interpersonal subsystem relationships other than the traditionally reported mother-child relationship (e.g., mother-father-child subsystem, grandparent-child subsystem, father-child-grandparent subsystem, and sibling subsystem). Each of these subsystem relationships developed its own characteristic psychosocial profile or interactional style and its own range of experiences. Interpersonal subsystem relationships were simultaneously embedded within the wider ecology of family unit subsystem. Transactions at the level of the family unit subsystem took

on a different thematic style than did relationships that occurred when parts of the family system (interpersonal subsystems) were observed interacting.

Within relationships at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem, children and adults attempted to resolve the task of being together as members of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem and being separate and alone. The primary manner in which family members attempted to resolve separateness ("Iness") and connectedness ("Weness") was through the development and validation of personal subsystem images.

The most significant discovery that emerged from this study was the identification of the image development and validation task as being a central, mediating family-level task. It appeared that developing and validating personal subsystem images, and the particular psychobiological profiles that these images reflected, gave birth to subsystem interactional styles and family themes. The synthesis of images at the level of interpersonal subsystems gave rise to psychosocial profiles (interactional styles). The synthesis of images at the level of the family unit subsystem gave rise to family themes.

In sum, the convergence of these four family-level tasks determined the structure and organization of the family system-child relationship as well as determining the range of experiences the young child was exposed to and how these experiences were interpreted by children and adults.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Child development researchers are constantly seeking answers to questions concerning the determinants of the young child's development. This seeking process takes the researcher on a journey into the lives of children, a journey which entails a constant seeking and finding. When lost or uncertain as to the proper path to take, the researcher maps out a different route, devising different methodological approaches to uncover new insights into how children develop. A crucial aspect of this research journey is the particular orientation or approach that the researcher selects to guide the investigative process. The scope of the seeking, the researcher's focus and the manner in which the researcher intends to collect and measure the data, to a large degree, will determine the findings.

Approaches to Studying the Young Child's Family.

The influence of the family on the developing child has and continues to be a major concern for child development researchers. In their struggle to document the effects of the family environment on child development, researchers have experimented with a variety of approaches. Over the past 50 years, child researchers have employed a variety of clinical, experimental, and observational procedures in their pursuit of finding relationships between the home environment and the child's level of psychological functioning.

Clinical and retrospective approaches. Two early approaches used in studying the effects that the family has on the developing child were

clinical observations and retrospective case studies of children reared in institutions (e.g., Bakwin, 1949; Goldfarb, 1945; Skeels et al., 1938; Spitz, 1946). These studies vividly pointed out that when compared to home-reared children, institutionalized children were observed to manifest various degrees of physical, social, and mental abnormalities. Such deficient development was attributed to the lack of a consistent, nurturant mother or to pathogenic mother-child interaction. The data collected in these maternal deprivation studies were interpreted as signifying the critical role that mothers performed in nurturing mentally healthy children. Despite some critiques, the principle that normal child development was a function of a loving and mentally healthy mother-child relationship remained firmly established in the minds of child researchers and theorists and reflected in later research.

Parent interview and child assessment approach. Gradually, child researchers began to turn their attention to non-clinic children and their families. At first researchers were especially interested in relating the development of specific child behaviors to maternal feeding and toilet training practices (Brody, 1956; Freud & Burlingham, 1944). Through the use of maternal interviews, which were sometimes complemented with child observations in nursery school settings, researchers attempted to relate the effects that specific mothering practices had (e.g., bottle versus breast feeding, feeding schedules, early versus late weaning, and the like) on the child's development of specific personality traits.

During the mid 1950's and throughout the 1960's, researchers experimented with a variety of approaches. Some researchers approached the problem by conducting interviews with mothers (Kohn, 1959; Sears,

Maccoby & Levin, 1957; White, 1957; Wortis et al., 1963), with fathers (Tasch, 1952), and with both mothers and fathers (Stolz, 1967). The primary focus of this type of research was to study the variety of child rearing attitudes, values, and reported practices employed by parents from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Sometimes researchers tried to correlate observations of the young child's adjustment in nursery school to reported parental behaviors (Highberger, 1955; Kami & Radin, 1967; Waldrop & Bell, 1964). Although the methodology changed, one primary focus remained the same. Researchers continued to stress the importance of the mother-child relationship to the exclusion of other relationships and their findings generally supported their perspective.

A somewhat different perspective that emerged during this time was the attempt to show a causal relationship between family background and composition (family constellation variables) and child personality traits as measured on tests of personality development and/or reports and observations of school performance. Relationships were reported between such factors as family structure and sex-role development (Brim, 1958), family background and assertive behavior (Mummery, 1954), family size and density and dependency behavior (Waldrop & Bell, 1964), family background and personality development (Burchinal, Gardner & Hawkes, 1958), father's occupation and child's personality development (Sewell & Haller, 1956), and maternal employment and personality development (Hoffman, 1961).

Critique of this research. The major criticism lodged against this research was that there was a tendency not to tightly control for

environmental variables other than the ones which were reported to be influencing the child's development. Another criticism of these studies was that parental child rearing behaviors were deduced from interviews; very few researchers studied actual parent-child interaction. The need to more closely duplicate scientific method and to study first-hand parent-child interaction led to the development of laboratory, parent-child interaction research.

Mother-child laboratory research. In an attempt to measure and evaluate mother-child interaction and to control for environmental variables, child researchers began studying mother-child interaction under controlled, laboratory conditions. Reviews of parent-child research (Freeberg & Payne, 1967; Martin, 1975; Streissguth & Bee, 1972) indicated that the trend that began in the late 1950's and which blossomed during the 1960's and early 1970's was to describe, evaluate, and modify the educational quality of various maternal child rearing styles. Convinced that competent mothering was the key ingredient for producing competent children, researchers proceeded to collect a wealth of laboratory data on the manner in which mothers from different socioeconomic backgrounds interacted with and/or taught their young child thinking and verbal skills. Researchers devised a variety of standardized and semi-structured laboratory experiments to observe how mothers interacted with their young child in each of these tasks.

It was a seemingly logical step during the late 1960's and early 1970's to study the impact that environmental intervention had on the mother-child relationship and the young child's intellectual development and subsequent school performance. Some investigators had concluded,

in part, from laboratory findings that mothers from low socioeconomic backgrounds employed educationally handicapping child rearing practices with their children. For example, low-income and minority group mothers were reported to employ restrictive rather than elaborate language styles when talking with their young child (Bernstein & Henderson, 1973; Greenglass, 1971). Restrictive language styles were assumed to contribute to the young child's below average performance on tests of intelligence. Such early language and cognitive deprivation very often was correlated with the poverty child's poor academic performance in elementary school.

Concerned with the relatively poor academic performance of children from low-income and minority backgrounds, an attempt was made to offset the deleterious effects that poverty reportedly had on the developing child by establishing a variety of environmental intervention programs (e.g., Gordon, 1969; Gray & Klaus, 1970; Levenstein, 1970; Painter, 1969). The primary thrust of intervention programs was, according to Chilman (1973) and Horowitz and Paden (1973), to provide early cognitive and language stimulation to high risk preschoolers through the child's participation in a remedial preschool program and/or by modifying mother-child teaching styles. It was hoped that the cognitive and linguistic styles nurtured via programmed intervention would better prepare the child for formal schooling, thus helping to break the cycle of poverty.

Critique of the research. Whereas earlier approaches were criticized for not being controlled enough, the opposite criticism was made of laboratory and intervention research. The more researchers attempted

to control environmental conditions by conducting the experiment in controlled contexts, the greater became the risk that the findings presented a myopic and artificial picture of the child's natural environment. Such experiments ran the risk of "throwing the baby out with the bath water."

A major problem that arises whenever developmental principles uncovered in laboratory research are generalized to real ecological situations is the question of transcontextual validity (Weisz, 1978). Applied to mother-child research the problem reads: How much of what is observed under laboratory and intervention conditions provides an accurate assessment of mother-child interaction as it occurs in more naturalistic contexts, especially the family? The setting and the methods of data collection used in parent-child research have been shown to influence the findings (Lyton, 1971, 1974).

Developing an Ecological Approach.

Researchers are still grappling with the problem of how to investigate and measure the young child's family environment. In an effort to redirect the seeking process and to bridge the gap between research and practice, a growing number of researchers have proposed that one approach for studying the developing child is to investigate this development as it unfolds naturalistically within the wider social world in which the child lives (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1973; Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Lamb, 1975; Lerner & Spanier, 1978; Lewis & Rosenblum, 1979; McCall, 1977). This approach is based upon the premise that children do not live in controlled, laboratory conditions and as such

researchers might advance the science of child development by focusing attention on the various ecological systems in which the child lives, namely the family system.

The adoption of an ecological child development research model necessitates investigating the interdependent and synergistic relationship that exists between the developing child and the various ecological systems in which this development unfolds. Such an ecology of childhood requires that child development researchers be willing to study the child's behavior in the context in which this behavior is embedded, to view psychological development within the context in which it occurs (Scarr, 1979). Accordingly, child development researchers are confronted with the arduous task of studying the young child's development within a variety of ecological settings: family system, peer system, and educational system.

Definition of Human Ecology.

Uri Bronfenbrenner, a leading proponent of ecological research, offers the following definition of the ecology of human development. He states:

> The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life span, between a growing organism and the changing immediate environments in which it lives, as this process is affected by relations obtaining within and between these immediate settings, as well as the larger social contexts, both formal and informal, in which the settings are embedded...The ecological environment is conceived topographically as a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next. (1977: 514.)

Drawing upon the work of Brim (1975), Bronfenbrenner (1977) proceeds

to outline an ecological model for studying child development. This model consists of four ecological levels which he contends exert a direct and indirect influence on the developing child. These ecological systems are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem.

Microsystem. The microsystem is the most immediate ecological system that directly influences the young child. The microsystem is defined as a physical setting in which the child engages in specific activities and relationships for specific periods of time (e.g., parent-child relationship, sibling relationship, and teacher-child relationship). Relationships embedded in the microsystem take place within specific physical settings (e.g., home and school) and are usually a function of particular roles (e.g., parent, teacher, and student).

Mesosystem. The next ecological level is termed the mesosystem. The mesosystem entails relationships between and among various microsystems. In the case of the young child, the mesosystem may consist of relationships between home, preschool, and extended family. The mesosystem can be pictured as a social network of microsystemic relationships.

Exosystem. The third ecological system, according to Bronfenbrenner, is the exosystem. The exosystem embraces the wider social structure which, although the child is not a direct participant in, exerts an indirect influence on the child's life (e.g., parent's place of work, local and state governmental agencies, and church). The exosystem forms the more embracing social structure in which various micro- and mesosystems are embedded.

Macrosystem. The final ecological system is the macrosystem. The

macrosystem constitutes those mores and folkways that are reflected in societal institutions: educational, legal, political, medical, and economic. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of human development, micro-, meso-, and exosystems are concrete manifestations of macrosystemic ideologies. An illustration of macrosystemic influence on the child's development is how federal social welfare guidelines exert an influence on family life in poverty families, or how the judicial system affects child custody decisions. These policies initiated on a macrosystem level indirectly influence the quality of life for children.

Family system as a microsystem. According to Bronfenbrenner's model, microsystem relationships are the most important and immediate relationships. The family system is the first and foremost microsystem for the developing child. Most social and behavioral scientists concur that the family system plays a major role in sculpting the young child's development. The family is regarded by some behavioral scientists (Rakoff, 1977; Wertheim, 1974) as an ecological imperative, as necessary for physical and psychological well being.

Except for relationships formed with teachers and peers, the young child spends most of her time with family members.[1] It is within the boundaries of the family system that many of the young child's most important microsystem relationships occur. Although the longitudinal effects that specific family system environments and child rearing

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[1] In this dissertation, the pronouns she and he, his and her are used in the generic sense to stand for "person".

practices have on the developing child have not yet been thoroughly investigated (Kagen, 1979), family system relationships are the most consistent, persistent, and meaningful interpersonal relationships in the lives of most children. Family relationships are different than any other type of social relationship.

Ecological Research on Family Systems.

Despite all of the importance attributed to families in shaping children's development, we have barely begun to study the family system. This reluctance to investigate what goes on inside families stems, in part, from a number of legitimate concerns. Family systems are multidimensional, biosocial structures and as such contain a variety of interpersonal relationships which are imbued with subtle yet complex meanings. Because of the intimate nature of family relationships, studying family systems requires that researchers develop new methodologies that are capable of monitoring the intricacies inherent in family life. Jacob (1975) has pointed out, for example, how difficult it is to differentiate abnormal from normal family interaction. Whenever families are observed, the effects of observer behavior on family behavior must be considered (Johnson & Bolstad, 1975). The sensitive and private issues that arise whenever families are studied coupled with the willingness of families to cooperate in research, makes it difficult to collect valid and reliable family-level data (Gelles, 1978). And, finally, the ever increasing variety of family life styles in addition to the nuclear family (Sussman, 1972), will require that researchers expand investigative efforts to include the variety of family forms in

which children are reared. All of these factors indeed make family system research a complicated task.

Yet, in spite of all these methodological obstacles, there is a need to study the different types of family systems that children and adults live in. Some researchers still continue to conduct experimental, laboratory research in their attempt to understand how mothers socialize their children (Blehar, 1974; Grusec & Kuczynski, 1980; Kagen & Ender, 1975; Tauber, 1979). There are, however, a growing number of researchers (Beckwith, 1971; Bronson, 1974; Clarke-Stewart, VaderStoep & Killian, 1979; Eldaro, Bradley & Caldwell, 1975; Escolona, 1973; Fagot, 1978; Laosa, 1978; Nelson, 1973; Steward & Steward, 1973; White, 1975) who have moved away from investigating the mother-child relationship under controlled, laboratory conditions and have approached the problem by conducting home observations of mother-child interaction. These ecological studies have depicted the diverse ways in which mothers nurture specific cognitive and social competencies in the young child.

This substantial body of ecological research has provided new insights into the structure and function of mother-child relations. Naturalistic investigations of the mother-child subsystem have uncovered the interdependent and mutually regulating relationship that exists between mother and child, a relationship in which mother and child reciprocally respond to and influence each other's behavior.

Some researchers nevertheless contend that ecological mother-child approaches are too limited in their scope. In the past few years a small number of researchers have brought attention to the fact that the young child's development is more than a simple function of the

mother-child relationship and have recommended that child researchers expand their approach to investigate the relationship between father and young child (Biller & Meredith, 1974; Lamb, 1977, 1979; Rebelsky & Hanks, 1971). Although naturalistic studies of the father-child relationship have been restricted almost entirely to father-infant and father-toddler interaction, such studies have shown that fathers can and do perform significant child rearing functions which traditionally have been ascribed to mothers. Preliminary findings suggest that when compared to mothers, fathers manifest qualitatively different but no less important teaching and interaction styles with their infants and toddlers.

Mother-child and, to a lesser extent, father-child investigations have vividly documented how the developing child is influenced by dyadic, microsystemic relationships.

However, research on dyadic, parent-child relations does not provide a comprehensive enough picture of life inside families and the range of social and physical experiences that shape the developing child. Concerned with the present state of parent-child research, a small but ever growing number of researchers have moved beyond dyadic, parent-child frameworks and instead have begun to study the family system-child relationship (Cochran & Brassard, 1979; Hartup, 1979; Lerner & Spanier, 1978; Lewis & Rosenblum, 1979). These authors have proposed an approach that entails investigating the variety of multidimensional relationships that exist inside families and which over time cumulatively shape the lives of both children and adults.

State of family research. At present, ecological research on the

family system-child relationship seems to be more in the planning stage of development. Child development researchers have been proposing various designs for studying the social world of the family, the dyadic and polyadic family system relationships in which the young child's development is embedded. Nevertheless, researchers have been slow to act upon proposals to study the young child's relationship to the family system. Consequently, there are few published empirical child-oriented family system studies. In this dissertation the family system-child relationship is defined as the ongoing dyadic and polyadic relationships that the young child establishes with members of the nuclear family and with grandparents and other immediate relatives.

The Study.

In this dissertation an attempt was made to move beyond the planning stage and to conduct an exploratory investigation of the family system-child relationship. A naturalistic, descriptive study was conducted on 12 non-clinic families with young children. Data were collected through naturalistic observations of mother-child, father-child, child-child, and entire family system-child relationships through family interviews, through the completion of the Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space Activity, and through a task oriented family project. All sessions were conducted in the home and were audiotaped. The family project session was videotaped.

The data collected on each family constituted a corpus of dialogue and activity taken from the stream of ongoing natural events of family life. As is characteristic of exploratory procedures employed in

anthropological, linguistic, and ethological research, this extensive body of data collected on the families was then analyzed without the guidance provided by apriori assumptions and hypotheses.

Since the family system-child microsystem is a new area of ecological research, this dissertation was considered preliminary and exploratory in both its methodology and its scope. Narrow hypotheses, classifications, and ethnocentric evaluations concerning the quality of family system-child relationships were avoided. Rather, this dissertation sought to identify prominent family-level issues which help define the family system-child relationship.

The intent of this dissertation was thus twofold and followed two procedures in tandem. First, a corpus of in depth data was collected on the natural, daily-living experiences (e.g., relationships, activities) contained in each family. The next step involved analyzing the data. The primary goal of the data analyzation process was to identify central family-level tasks that seemed to be generic to all 12 families and which were observed to organize the structure and function of the family system-child relationship.

Scope and limitations. The focus of this study was restricted solely to the nuclear family system in relation to the preschool child. In some families, however, the preschool child's relationship with grandparents also was documented. While many kinds of polyadic and dyadic subsystem relationships operated inside the families studied (e.g., marital subsystem, grandparent-parent subsystem, extended family-child subsystem, and child-peer system), it was physically impossible to focus on all of these complex relationships in a single dissertation.

As noted, this study was exploratory and preliminary. It represented an attempt to conduct ecological research on the family system-child relationship, to see what kinds of tasks would be uncovered when the young child's family was studied naturalistically. No attempt was made to formulate definitive statements concerning the tasks uncovered and the quality of family system-child relationships observed. The level of analysis was not on identifying and evaluating the young child's cognitive and social development nor on the particular manner in which parents nurtured and socialized this development. Rather, the level of analysis was on redefining the family system-child relationship: identifying and describing those global, family-level tasks which appeared to guide the child's relationship with the family system, imbuing this relationship with meaning and purpose.

There were a number of methodological limitations in this dissertation which unfortunately determined the kind of data collected, the level of data analyzed and the generalizability of the findings. These limitations can be attributed partly to the fact that family systems research is a relatively new research field which as yet has not developed a substantial body of standardized methodologies and partly to the inherent difficulty in studying complex biosocial systems such as the family system. And, finally, the lack of funds to support the research also played a role in determining the kind of research that was feasible.

Some of the restrictions are of particular note. First of all, the time that was required to conduct an in depth family study necessitated restricting the sample to a manageable size. Thus, only 12 families were studied. During sample selection, the type of family form and the

backgrounds of the families was intentionally limited. Only nuclear family systems with first-time married parents were investigated. There was also a preponderence of Italian American and Roman Catholic families in the sample, all of whom resided in a metropolitan Northeast community. All of these limitations in the sample prohibited generalizing the findings to other types of families from different sociocultural, religious, and geographical backgrounds.

In addition to biases in the sample, there were a number of other methodological limitations that plagued the research. There was an absence of inter-rater reliability. The findings were based entirely on one researcher's observations. The fact that standardized and projective measures of personality development and time sampling and coding of observations were not utilized determined both the kind and level of data collected and the manner in which the data was analyzed. The data were not subjected to statistical interpretation. No evaluations concerning the quality of the various family system-child relationships observed in the families studied were thus made.

When viewed within the above limitations, the types of family-level tasks uncovered in this study must be approached with caution. In all likelihood, some of the tasks emphasized reflect the type of family form studied and the methodology employed. The family-level tasks reported in this study, however, may serve as a source from which to conduct future research. What is needed are studies which employ more sophisticated research designs and which are conducted on larger and more diversified samples of families in order to ascertain the relevance of the tasks identified and described in this dissertation.

Organization of Dissertation.

In the following chapters the results of an ecological study of 12 non-clinic families with young children are presented. In Chapter II, a review of child development research on the child's family is presented. A description of the methodology is presented in Chapter III while Chapter IV contains a profile of each of the 12 families. The findings of this study are presented in Chapters V through IX. The task of establishing interpersonal subsystem relationships is illustrated in Chapter V. In Chapter VI, the task of establishing relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem is presented. Chapter VII contains a description of the task of resolving "Iness" and "Weness." The task of developing and validating images is presented in Chapter VIII. How these four tasks operate at interface in two families is depicted in Chapter IX. And finally, a discussion of the findings is presented in Chapter X, while Chapter XI contains a summary and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

As prefaced in Chapter I, child development researchers have gradually come to acknowledge the importance of investigating the various social worlds or ecological systems that the young child functions in rather than limiting their studies entirely to dyadic, caregiver-child research. It appears that many child development researchers and theorists are adopting the position that any complete understanding of the developing child can only come from intensive ecological investigations into the various social worlds in which the young child's life is embedded.

An Overview of Parent-Child Research.

Studying human behavior in the ecological context in which the behavior occurs is not a recent development in the social and behavioral sciences. Cultural anthropologists have been conducting naturalistic investigations into the effects that culture has on personality developing for quite some time (Benedict, 1934; Lewis, 1959; Mead, 1930; Whiting & Whiting, 1975). As Wicker (1979) points out, the discipline of ecological psychology has steadily grown over the last three decades. However, when focusing on parent-child relations, child development researchers have, until recently, been somewhat reluctant to direct their study of parent-child relations outside of controlled, experimental settings.

As outlined in Chapter I and as pointed out by Biller (1976) and Clarke-Stewart (1977), the various approaches used to study the child's

relationship with her family have undergone many changes over the last 50 years. The first change occurred when researchers moved away from clinical observations and retrospective case studies of institutionalized and clinic-treated children and started interviewing mothers of non-clinic children. The focus of this approach was to ascertain the types of child rearing practices that mothers employed with young children.

Gradually, interviews of mothers were complemented with observations and/or psychological testing of the child, usually in the nursery school setting. The focus of this research approach was to find cause and effect relationships between unitary mother-child dimensions. For example, children of mothers who reported to employ permissive toileting methods were reported to develop less neurotic personality traits. However, no attempt was made to see if indeed a relationship existed between reported maternal attitudes and practices and actual observed maternal interaction styles. Nor was there much effort made to measure the maternal behaviors which translated these various reported attitudes to the young child. And finally, little attempt was initiated to collect data on the other family members who interacted with the young child.

During the late 1950's and throughout the 1960's and early 1970's, another paradogmatic shift occurred in the approach used to study the effects of the family environment on the young child. This stage in the research was characterized by an emphasis upon how mothers from different socioeconomic backgrounds nurtured cognitive and language skills in their young child. Researchers approached this problem by observing mother-child interaction under controlled, laboratory conditions. Another approach that became popular during the late 1960's and early

1970's was to measure the effects that early intervention had on the young child's cognitive and linguistic development and on the quality of the mother-child relationship.

The myriad of data that was collected during this time continuously pointed to the fact that when compared to middle-class and upper-middle-class mothers, low-income and ethnic minority mothers engaged in parent-child interactions that appeared to produce cognitive and language deficiencies in their young child. However, this research was criticized as being ethnocentric and fraught with a number of methodological weaknesses (Baratz & Baratz, 1970; Cole & Brunner, 1972; Horowitz & Paden, 1973; Kagen, 1974; Sigel, 1972; Starr, 1971). Since fathers and other family members were excluded from the research, this research was criticized for presenting a matriocentric and acontextual picture of life in low-income and ethnic minority families.

Ecological parent-child research. Even today, some researchers continue to employ a matriocentric, laboratory approach when investigating the young child's family environment. However, it was during the mid 1970's that researchers began to move out of the laboratory and began to study the mother-child relationship within the behavior context of the home. More recently some researchers have widened their focus to investigate the father-child relationship. Mother-child and father-child studies have shown how dyadic, microsystem relationships operate in naturalistic settings and how mothers and fathers influence the developing child. This research has illustrated the multivariate nature of the child's family relationships.

Critique of this approach. However, just as the mother-child

laboratory studies were criticized for presenting an artificial picture of mother-child interaction, ecological mother-child and father-child studies have been criticized for failing to focus on the family system-child relationship. This research is child-centered rather than family-centered. Lamb (1975), a leading proponent of father-child research, has scrutinized his own research for focusing entirely on dyadic interaction rather than focusing on the entire family system. Clarke-Stewart (1978) also has admitted that limiting the investigation to dyadic subsystem relationships runs the risk of distorting the actual effects that polyadic relationships (e.g., father-mother-child) have on the young child. Clarke-Stewart's research has shown that children do not live in static, dyadic systems. On the contrary, children live in family systems in which all family members reciprocally collaborate to influence each other's development.

Evaluating the family environment. Recent ecological studies (Clarke-Stewart, 1978; Dunn & Kendrick, 1979; Greenbaum & Landau, 1979; Lerner & Spanier, 1978; McGillicuddy-De Lisi, Sigel & Johnson, 1979) have shown that the quality of the young child's home environment cannot be totally derived from merely investigating isolated dyadic subsystems. There are many facets of the family environment which cumulatively influence the young child. As Jackson (1965) proposed, the whole of a family system is different from the sum of its parts.

It is too simplistic and hence false to conclude, as White (1975) had done, that the more competent the mother is observed to be at mothering, the more competent is the family's child rearing environment. For example, the fact that the mother or father is judged to employ

educationally enriching child rearing strategies with the young child is no indication that all family members who interact with the young display the same positive influence. When viewed within a family system perspective, child rearing, as Stolz's (1967) research showed, is a function of the entire family system: children and adults reciprocally influencing each other's development. Such influences as the level of marital satisfaction (Rollins & Galligan, 1978), sibling relationships (Cicirelli, 1973), and even the image of an absent father (Lewis & Weinrub, 1976) may exert an influence on the developing child.

Family Systems Research.

Unfortunately, there are very few ecological studies of whole families. Child development researchers readily admit to the importance of the family in sculpting the young child's development but have been understandably reluctant to venture inside the family system. Studying whole families is an arduous task. Appropriate methodologies have to be devised and researchers must be willing to spend an inordinate amount of time and energy in recruiting families, arranging observation and interview schedules, and, finally, conducting the actual research. This may explain why at the present time there does not exist in the child development literature a conceptual framework to use as a guideline for studying the young child's family system.

The major insights into the family system functioning have come from the work of family therapists (Ackerman, 1966; French, 1977; Jackson, 1965; Kantor, 1979; Minuchin, 1974; Satir, 1972) and a few ecological studies of whole families (Henry, 1971; Hess & Handel, 1974;

Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Ziegler & Musliner, 1977). There are also a small number of practitioners who have applied the principles developed by family therapists to the newly emerging field of family enrichment (Cromwell & Thomas, 1976; Mace & Mace, 1978; Otto, 1976). The theme underlying the work of the above authors is that the actualization of human potentiality is an expression of family system potentiality. Or, as Olim (1968) proposes, the self actualizing person is more likely to come from a fully functioning family.

The contribution of family therapists. Family therapists have documented the important role that family relationships play in shaping human development and what happends when family relationships become dysfunctional and pathogenic. Unfortunately, time does not allow for an in depth discussion of various conceptual frameworks advanced by family clinicians and the implications that these frameworks may have for understanding how children grow into adults. However, Framo (1979) has summarized some of the major findings that have been reported during the last 25 years since family therapy emerged as a form of psychotherapy.

To paraphrase Framo, clinical and experimental research with families participating in therapy has revealed the following findings.

1. The family is an intricate and intimate system that is characterized by personally tailored rules, themes, homeostatic feedback mechanisms, communication patterns, myths and rituals. Because families are emotionally charged systems, they can bring both the best and worst out in family members.

2. Individual psychopathology characterizing the "identified patient," is, in reality, present throughout the family system. However,

the psychopathology of the family system is projected onto a "family scapegoat," thus becoming localized and manifested in one designated family member.

3. Normal and abnormal behavior in family members receives meaning from the family system and thus can best be evaluated in relation to the function such behavior performs in the family system.

4. A reciprocal relationship exists between the intrapsychic organization and conflicts in individual family members and the intrapsychic organization and conflicts inherent in the family system.

5. The intimate relationships that exist in families are different from all other social relationships. Different personality traits and behaviors thus emerge in the context of the family system than in other social contexts.

6. Family systems tend to mold individual family member behavior to fit the needs and themes of the family. As such, family member behavior can best be interpreted by analyzing the family system rather than adopting an individual, acontextual orientation.

7. Whenever two or more family members come together, there is a potential for psychological collusion occurring, "one person carries part of the motivations and psychology of another" (p. 990). Such collusions can be benign ("If you are assertive than I can be more submissive.") or they can be unconscious and potentially malignant ("If you provide for me, then I will internalize and act out your bad self.").

8. Behavior symptoms of individual family members are a function of the relational context in which the symptoms and behaviors are embedded. Accordingly, presenting problems of the identified patient can

best be understood by analyzing the social matrix (e.g., particular family subsystem) in which the behavior is displayed.

The family as a social system. A common thread underlying the findings presented by Framo and many of the newly emerging family therapy frameworks is the concept of the family as a social system. Kantor and Lehr (1975) summed up the family system perspective as follows:

> We understand a system to be a set of different things or parts that meet two requirements: first, these parts are directly or indirectly related to one another in a network of reciprocal causal effects, and second, each component part is related to one or more of the other parts of the set in a reasonably stable way during any particular period of time...The process model we are presenting views the activity of the family as a complex integrity of systemic structures and forces which elaborate and change in response to both internal and external phenomena...We contend that family systems, like all social systems, are organizationally complex, open, adaptive, and information-processing systems. (p. 10)

A central corollary endogenous to family systems theory, and one implied in the above statement, is that all family members collaborate to influence each other's development. The psychosocial development of family members is seen as a function of the development of the entire family system. The actualization of individual potentialities is mediated through family interaction. Individual potentiality is viewed as an expression of family potentiality.

Within a family systems framework, family relations are defined as being multidimensional and multicausal. Such relationships cannot be fully understood, as many early childhood researchers have proposed, by focusing attention exclusively on subsystem interaction (e.g., mother-

child or father-child interaction). As Wertheim (1978) stated:

> It is a fundamental principle of system functioning that the behavior of a system depends on how its parts fit together, on their relationships, which determines the organization of the "whole", and not on the individual characteristics of the parts. (p. 24.)

When applied to researching the parent-child relationship, a family systems perspective would view the young child's development not solely as a function of specific parent-child interactions but, instead, as a function of family system interaction. According to a family systems approach, studying dyadic relationships without considering the wider system in which these relationships are embedded can only present a partial, and oftentimes inaccurate, picture of the young child's development in the family.

Ecological family systems research. There exists only a few studies of whole family ecologies. The work of Jerome Cohen and Bernice Eiduson (1976), Jules Henry (1971), Robert Hess and Gerald Handel (1974), David Kantor and William Lehr (1975), and Robert Ziegler and Peter Musliner (1977) can be considered representative attempts to systematically study the family system.

Jules Henry's pioneering work was the first naturalistic observation of American family life. Henry lived with and made detailed observations of five families. These families all had a child who was clinically diagnosed as manifesting some form of childhood psychosis. Despite the fact that these families cannot be considered as representative of non-clinic families, Henry's observations vividly depicted how the family environment exerted a cumulative influence on both children

and adults. His descriptive narrations illustrated how difficult it is to differentiate family interaction patterns in clinic families from interaction patterns in non-clinic families. This exhaustive study illustrated the complex nature of observing and analyzing whole families.

Robert Hess and Gerald Handel conducted an intensive and for the time an innovative study of 33 non-clinic families from the Mid-West section of America. All families had both parents present and the children ranged in age from 6 to 18. Instead of naturalistic observations, data were collected via interviews and projective tests conducted with family members in the home. Five family processes were subsequently identified as being indigenous to the psychosocial organization of family life. These five processes are as follows:

1. Separateness and connectedness: patterns of being together and apart in the family.

2. Congruence of images: image of oneself and images other family members have of oneself and the process whereby these images are communicated.

3. Family theme: strategic interactional pattern around which all family acts, activities, and ideas are organized.

4. Family boundaries: the decision process whereby the family determines the complexity and differentiation of individual personalities; what experiences family members should invest their energies in, inside and outside the family; what standards the family uses to evaluate intra- and extrafamilial experiences.

5. Biosocial differentiation: the images and expectations parents have for their children as a function of sex and age.

Hess and Handel contended that these five family processes, in the families studies, served as an organizational framework for understanding the intricacies of family life. In spite of the fact that the researchers did not observe family interaction, instead relying on interview and projective tests to collect data, this research was one of the first attempts to study personality development as a function of family organization. Interestingly enough, the family processes identified some 25 years ago continue to reappear, although somewhat modified, in present clinical and family systems research.

Robert Ziegler and Peter Musliner reexamined the work of Sander (1972). Sander conducted an intensive, longitudinal study of 30 first-born infants and their parents. These families all resided in Boston. Ziegler and Musliner restudied three of these families 15 years later. Through an intensive naturalistic and laboratory investigation of these three families, these authors discovered, among other findings, that family system patterns and themes that were originally identified by Sander when the identified child was an infant, were still prevalent some 15 years later.

Although their conclusions cannot be generalized to all families, the results of this study illustrates the continuity of family system patterns over time. The three sets of parents were found to be negotiating similar issues which were first identified when they had their first child.

Jerome Cohen and Bernice Eiduson are in the process of conducting a longitudinal study of child rearing patterns of 200 young children who are living in a variety of family forms in California: social contract

marriages, communal living arrangements, single mother families, and traditional married families. A variety of data collection methods are being employed: intensive interviews, naturalistic observations, and psychological assessment of children. The study was initiated when the mother was pregnant and will continue until the child is six years old.

Although only preliminary findings are available, the authors have identified three classifications of parental roles that were observed to be used by the parents in this study to socialize their children. Parents in this study were observed to play the roles of Intervener, Authority Figure, and Modeller.

Intervener. There were two types of interveners. The first type is the parent who consciously intervenes and shapes the young child's development in a predetermined direction. This is the parent who has some desired goal in mind and employs appropriate child rearing methods to achieve this goal. The second type of parent is the one who appears to leave the child's development up to fate. This type of parent does not consciously have a particular predetermined goal for the child's development and thus does not apply any particular child rearing method to bring about desired changes in the child.

Authority Figure. This role entails the manner in which parents determine the breadth and depth of social and physical experiences that their child will be exposed to and allowed to participate in. The particular manner and to what extent parents decide to exert their authority will determine the types of educational experiences the young child will come into contact with inside and outside the family world. For example, the kinds of television shows the family watches if the family has a

television set, religious beliefs, the use of drugs and alcohol by parents, and the types of food that are eaten.

Modeller. Parents consciously and unconsciously model certain types of behavior. Children thus come into contact with behavior models for sexual and emotional intimacy, social and antisocial aggressiveness, prosocial behavior, competitive and achievement behavior, and possession and use of material objects.

The final results of this interesting study have not been reported. However, the preliminary findings pointed out the variety of roles parents employ across family settings in socializing the young child. Since the physical and personality development of children are being monitored, an important component of this research hopefully will be the description of how various family environments affect the developing child.

The most comprehensive family systems conceptual framework reported to date is proposed by David Kantor and William Lehr. Kantor and Lehr employed a variety of research techniques in their investigation into the lives of 19 families. In this ecological study, five, largely unstructured, data collection procedures were employed: live-in observer reports; tape recordings of ongoing family life (tape recorders were installed in each home and were turned on by the first person to get up and turned off by the last person to retire for the evening); videotapes of family interaction in the office; family interviews; and family and individual TAT tests. These 19 families represented the full spectrum of socioeconomic and mental health statuses.

Kantor and Lehr proposed a descriptive theory of family process.

A simplistic breakdown of this complex framwork is as follows. As a social system, the family system devises informational feedback strategies for members (individual subsystems, interpersonal subsystems, and family unit system) and between the family system (intrasystemic environment) and the outside world (extrasystemic environment). Family members, within the daily activites of family life, were also observed to exhibit a variety of roles. Kantor and Lehr explained family psychopolitics (the roles individual family members assume) through a four player parts model. Thus, each individual family member can enact the role of initiator (leader), follower, opposer (challenger), and bystander. The richness of family living may, from the perspective of the roles individuals enact, be seen as a function of the opportunity for each family member to enact all four of these player parts.

Family life was also reported to consist of three access dimensions (space, time, and energy) and three target dimensions (power, effect, and meaning). Family members were observed to devise specific patterns for using space (physical and social space), time, and energy to obtain power (efficacy), affect (nurturance), and meaning (individual and family meaning). The information feedback strategies and player parts that family members used, were observed to enable family members to function and develop inside and outside the family system.

Critique of family systems research. The clinical research on families in therapy and the few reported ecological studies on non-clinic families have contributed to the newly emerging field of family systems theory. However, there are a number of limitations inherent in family systems research that need to be addressed. To begin with, most of what

is known about family systems has come from clinical studies of families undergoing therapeutic intervention. Behavior elicited in the therapy room cannot be considered as representative of behavior displayed under more ecological conditions. Families behave somewhat differently at home than when observed in clinical, acontextual environments. In addition, family organization indigenous to clinic families most likely is somewhat different, takes on a different structure and function, than family organization in non-clinic families. Although there are certainly similarities in family process manifested in non-clinic and clinic families, there needs to be research initiated to ascertain whether or not the principles and assumptions outlined in the family therapy literature are in fact generic to and operate in non-clinic, asymptomatic families.

Ecological research of non-clinic families has been conducted mostly on families with older children. Except for the work of Ziegler and Musliner (1977) and the research begun by Cohen and Eiduson (1976), a major limitation of the family research is that little is known about family systems with children under the age of 6. Whether or not families with young children function differently, operate according to slightly different system principles, than do families with older children needs to be investigated. For example, are the conceptual frameworks outlined by Hess and Handel (1974) and Kantor and Lehr (1975) relevant for understanding how families nurture the development of young children.

Besides methodological limitations, there are a number of other concerns plaguing family research. Many of the dimensions proposed in family conceptual frameworks are descriptive and as of yet have not been quantified. This makes it hard to evaluate present family frameworks,

especially when these dimensions are applied to interpreting the child's development inside the family system.

Another problem centers around the lack of communication that continues to exist between family researchers and child development researchers. As is characteristic of most beginning disciplines, many of the theoretical principles articulated by family clinicians and theorists have received only minimal attention from researchers in allied fields, in this case child researchers. Child development researchers have tended to overlook some of the major pieces of family systems research. Child oriented researchers have failed to apply what is presently known about family process to conceptualizations of family system-child relationships. Even in some of the more recent child development literature in which the family system-child relationship is acknowledged and in which the family is viewed as a social system (Dunn & Kendrick, 1979; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, Sigel & Johnson, 1979), the theoretical orientation has been on the child rather than the family system-child relationship. It seems as though family researchers and child researchers function in mutually exclusive research worlds. Family systems researchers tend to overlook child and adult development while child researchers tend to overlook family system development.

Application to this dissertation. Because of these limitations and the relative newness of family systems research, no attempt was made in this study to replicate the few existing studies of whole families. What was used, however, were some of the methodological procedures employed in ecological family studies. Once the corpus of data was collected, the conceptual frameworks proposed by Hess and Handel (1974) and Kantor and

Lehr (1975) and clinical models outlined by Minuchin (1974) and Wertheim (1975) were used as guidelines for discussing the findings reported in this study. In Chapter X, the tasks uncovered in this dissertation were related to some of the findings reported in the above cited research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Conducting research with whole families imposes some inherent complications and limitations on the methodology. To begin with, it is extremely difficult and time-consuming to recruit non-clinic families for research purposes. This might explain why most family research has been conducted with clinic and/or low-income families who underwent some form of intervention. Still, another problem arises once families have agreed to be studied. Studying whole families requires an inordinate amount of time and energy. From a logistical point of view, research procedures have to be coordinated with each family's particular life style. This necessitates arranging interview and observation schedules that are unobtrusive especially if the main intent of the research is to procure naturalistic data on normal, day-to-day family life. And, finally, once data collection schedules are coordinated, an appropriate methodology has to be devised to ensure the systematic study of the family system-child relationship.

Selecting an appropriate methodology is not a simple matter. The family system-child relationship is essentially a multidyadic and multidimensional system and as such is more difficult to study than dyadic, parent-child subsystems. Studying the family system-child relationship is a difficult task which is further complicated by the fact that there is a paucity of empirically tested family system-child research methodologies and measuring instruments to act as a guide for conducting family-level research. Baldwin and Baldwin (1973) point out the fact

that psychological research does not have a "rich tradition of naturalistic studies" from which to devise methodologies for studying children and parents in their natural environments. In addressing the problems associated with investigating individuals and social groups interacting in ecological settings, these researchers stated: "Of course the overriding problem is that we do not have any model of human interaction, even of two people, that can serve as a framework for the analysis of such complicated patterns (p. 721)."

The fact that few model studies were available to serve as a guide for conducting this research necessitated developing new and untested research procedures. In addition, all of the above limitations and complications inherent in conducting ecological family-level research dictated the number of families that realistically could be investigated, the kind of data collected, and the level of data analyzation employed.

Sample.

Criteria for selection. Since the intent of the study was to study a small representative sample of average, non-clinic families, a number of stipulations regarding selection were followed. Parents had to be in their first marriage. Each family had to have at least one child between the ages of 2 and 5 with no children older than 9. Families could not be undergoing any type of observable crisis or be involved in any form of intervention (e.g., child or adult receiving therapy, child enrolled in Head Start or full day care program). To ensure for a representative socioeconomic sample, every effort was made to recruit families from diverse educational, economic, and residence

(e.g., ruban, suburban, rural) backgrounds.

Recruitment and selection of families. Families were recruited from four preschools located in Rhode Island: an urban parochial preschool serving predominantly working-class and low-income families; two suburban play schools one serving middle-income and the other serving upper-middle-income families; and a playgroup located on a small farm and attended by children from professional families residing in a semi-rural community. Hence, the 12 families were recruited from representative geographical (urban-suburban-rural) and socioeconomic (working-class, middle-class, and upper-middle class) backgrounds.

Perspective families were recruited in two ways. The teachers in the preschools provided a list of families that appeared to meet the research requirements and who the teachers felt, after briefly mentioning the project to some of their parents, might agree to the study. At one of the suburban playschools and at the rural playgroup, the researcher was invited by the teachers to discuss the study at one of the mothers' meetings. Following brief presentations at the mothers' meetings, a list of families that appeared to meet the research requirements was compiled. Upon reviewing the teachers' lists and the lists compiled at the mothers' meetings, four final lists of families that seemed to meet the research requirements were organized. Since each preschool served, for the most part, families representing homogeneous socioeconomic and geographical backgrounds, it was hoped that an equal number of families would be recruited from each school.

From these lists, families were contacted via the telephone to ascertain if they were interested in the project. For those families

that expressed an interst, a preliminary meeting in the family's home was arranged. The intent of this meeting was to discuss the research more in depth. Careful attention was given to explain to each family that only after this initial discussion would they be asked to make a decision concerning their commitment to participate in the study. Consenting to a preliminary meeting did not mean that the family was expected to make a decision to participate in the research. It was pointed out to each family that after this preliminary meeting they would be contacted again by telephone to learn of their decision. Every effort was made to allow each family enough time to arrive at a decision without in any way feeling pressured.

In sum, 19 families who met all of the research requirements were contacted by telephone to arrange for a preliminary meeting for purposes of discussing the research. The following is a breakdown according to each school.

Urban Parochial School. Three of the six families contacted agreed to participate in the study. There were a variety of reasons given by those families who did not want to participate. In one family, the wife was in the process of separating from her husband, a fact that was unknown prior to the initial phone call. Another family invited the researcher over for dinner to discuss the project. The father was somewhat skeptical of whether or not the children would "act themselves" with an observer in the house. Although he stated, after supper was over, that his two daughters did indeed "act themselves", he questioned the purpose of the research; he just did not see the purpose of such a study. In a later telephone conversation with the mother, she expressed

her husband's confusion and unwillingness to participate in the study. The third family, after discussing the project on the phone and arranging for a preliminary meeting, revealed that they were going to be at the beach for most of the summer, thus eliminating them from the study.

Middle-Class Playschool. The names of four families meeting the research requirements were selected from the middle-class playschool. Two of the families were randomly selected and contacted via telephone. Both families agreed to the preliminary meeting, after which they decided to participate in the study.

Upper-Middle-Class Playschool. Following the discussion at one of the mothers' meetings, a list of six families was compiled. Three of the families decided, after the preliminary meeting, to participate in the research while three families decided not to meet for a preliminary meeting. In two of these families the major reason given for not participating in the study was that the husband's employment required that he spend a great deal of time away from his family, thus making it difficult for him to make a commitment to the project. In the remaining family, the mother felt that her husband would not agree to having someone come into his home and observe his family. Later, it was discovered that this couple were experiencing marital problems and were in the process of seeking counseling.

Rural Playground. After meeting with the mothers at a session arranged by the playgroup director, four of the six mothers who attended expressed interest in the study. A follow-up telephone call was made a week later. Three of the four mothers, after discussing the study with their husbands, decided to arrange for a preliminary meeting. Three

preliminary meetings were arranged after which two families agreed to the study. The third family, because of social commitments, cancelled two preliminary appointments. After the third cancellation, it was decided not to pursue the family for the study.

The twelfth family. The remaining family was recruited via a social contact. Originally, this family was to become the experimental family, observing them first to evaluate the effectiveness of the research procedures. After three meetings with the family, at which time the husband, wife, and children provided invaluable feedback concerning research procedures, it was decided to include the family in the study and to proceed with the regularly scheduled observations.

In all, 19 families were initially contacted by telephone to arrange for a preliminary meeting. Thirteen families agreed to this initial session. After the preliminary meeting, 12 families decided to participate in and eventually completed the study.

Families were not provided with any monetary or service reinbursement in exchange for their participation in the research. The only agreement that was made was that at the end of the study the researcher would answer any questions that the family might have concerning their participation in the research. However, it was stipulated that the purpose of the meeting was not for the researcher to provide his evaluation of the family. Rather, the intention of this meeting was for the family and the researcher to discuss how the family felt about the study and how the researcher felt about observing the family in the family's home.

Parents. Twelve sets of first-time married parents participated

in the study. The demographic characteristics of the 12 sets of parents are as follows:

Age: At the time of the first interview, the mothers ranged in age from 26 to 39 with a mean age of 29.5 years. The fathers ranged in age from 29 to 41 with a mean age of 34 years.

Ethnicity: Rhode Island is heavily populated with people from Irish, Italian, French, and a variety of Western European backgrounds. Accordingly, although the dissertation population was somewhat over-represented with Italian Americans, the population was representative of the ethnic makeup of the state of Rhode Island. The mothers studied represented the following ethnic groups: five mothers were Italian American, two were French American, two were Irish American, two were from mixed, Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, and one mother was from a Portuguese-Greek background. The fathers represented the following ethnic groups: five were Italian American, two were French American, four were from mixed, Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, and one father was Irish-American.

Education: The mothers in the study ranged in number of years attending school from 11 to 16 with a mean of 13.5. The fathers ranged in the number of years attending school from 7 to 20 with a mean of 14.5 years.

Three of the mothers graduated from college with degrees in education while two mothers earned Associate of Arts degrees, one in nursing and one in secretarial science. Two mothers completed one year of college, five mothers completed high school; and one mother completed the 11th grade.

Two fathers earned terminal degrees in medicine and law while two

fathers earned masters degrees, one in engineering and one in education. One of the fathers was pursuing his masters degree in vocational education on a part-time basis. Another father held an undergraduate degree in business and one father successfully completed all but six credits of college before dropping out to take over the family grocery business. Of the remaining five fathers, two fathers completed high school and three fathers went as far as the eighth, ninth, and 10th grades respectively.

Employment: Five of the mothers were employed: four worked part-time: a playgroup teacher, a medical secretary, a nurse's aide, a jewelry worker, and one mother worked full-time as a junior high school teacher. One mother was employed as an elementary school teacher before she was married and one mother, at the end of the study, began work assisting her husband in his new primary medical care practice. The remaining five mothers held some form of non-professional employment before they decided to have children. These mothers were employed full-time as housewives.

Five of the fathers were employed in blue collar occupations: a jewelry worker, a television repair person, an electrician, a plumber, and a stone mason. Three fathers were teachers: one elementary, one junior high, and one high school vocational education. One father owned and operated a small grocery store, while the three remaining fathers were employed as a business systems engineer, a lawyer, and a medical doctor.

Religious affiliation: Of the 12 families, 10 were affiliated with some expression of the Christian religion. The following is a breakdown

according to religious affiliation: eight Roman Catholics, one Episcopalian, and one Lutheran. The remaining two families were in the process of deciding which Christian denomination they would become affiliated with.

The large number of Roman Catholics represented in the dissertation population can be partially attributed to the fact that the state of Rhode Island is heavily populated with Roman Catholics.

Residence: All except one family resided in Rhode Island, residing in nearby Massachusetts. Four of the families lived in urban environments, three living in tenements and one living in a single family house. Four families owned medium-sized homes in relatively crowded middle-class suburbs while four families owned homes in more spacious, upper-middle-class communities.

Children. In all, 30 children participated in the study. There were 15 girls and 15 boys. At the time of the first observation the children ranged in age from 1 month to 9 years. There were six children between the ages of 1 month and 2 years, 15 children between the ages of 2 1/2 and 5 1/2, and 9 children between the ages of 6 and 9. The number of children in each family ranged from 2 to 4 with a median number of 2 children in each family. Only one of the children between the ages of 3 and 5 1/2 did not attend a formal preschool experience at least two or three mornings a week. None of the infants and toddlers were enrolled in a formal educational experience.

Grandparents. All of the families had at least one of their grandparents residing nearby and who was active in the lives of the family. Three of the urban families had a grandparent living in the same

dwelling while two suburban families had just recently moved out of a home in which a grandparent lived.

A demographic profile of each of the 12 families is contained in Table 1.

Procedures.

Each family was seen on at least six different occasions. The minimum amount of time spent with each family was 16 hours. All sessions were conducted in the home and were tape recorded. The final home session was videotaped. Families were first seen in June and early July of 1978. The remaining sessions were conducted at approximately five week intervals. Thus, families were seen over a six month time period.

The following is a description of each session in order of occurrence.

Preliminary meeting. During the preliminary meeting, the details of the study were explained to the family. It was explained to each family that the purpose of the project was to learn about how families work and how preschool children were influenced by their family. It was also pointed out to each family that the intent of the study was not to make evaluations about the quality of family life but rather to study the variety of experiences young children were exposed to in their families. Although it was made clear to the parents that the study was concerned with family interaction, couples were assured that the researcher was not concerned with their private lives. Parents were also assured that if at any time they felt uncomfortable with the investigation, they were free to terminate their involvement. The only stipulation made was for the parents to explain why they made this decision.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE 12 FAMILIES

Name	Number of children	Age of mother	Age of father	Mother's education	Father's education	Father's occupation	Residence
DiMaggio	2	28	29	High School	9th grade	Electrician	Urban
Fisher	3	33	35	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Teacher	Suburbs
St. Anne	2	34	36	11th grade	7th grade	Jewelry	Urban
Builder	2	35	39	Bachelor's Degree	Bachelor's Degree	Engineer	Semi-rural
Lancer	2	29	29	Associate's Degree	Medical Degree	Medical Doctor	Semi-rural
Waverly	4	39	41	High School	10th grade	Stone Mason	Suburbs
Nazareth	2	34	38	High School	11th grade	T.V. Repairman	Urban
Mason	3	31	31	High School	Law Degree	Lawyer	Semi-rural
L'Campion	2	26	35	Bachelor's Degree	Master's Degree	Teacher	Suburbs
Cabana	2	32	33	Associate's Degree	3+ years college	Grocery Owner	Semi-rural
Williams	2	30	30	High School	Bachelor's Degree	Teacher	Suburbs
Almeida	4	30	38	High School	High School	Plumber	Urban

Family interview. An unstandardized, semi-structured interview was used with each family. The interview was divided into three sections. The first part consisted of a series of specific, information questions pertaining to the background of family members: age, sex, ethnicity, religious affiliation, number of years married, education, etc. The next section contained open ended questions centering around parental descriptions of and expectations for children. The final section entailed open ended questions about parents' childhoods, courtships, and expectations for married life and family life. The interview session lasted, depending on the family, for approximately two hours. It was explained to parents that their children could participate and not to allow the interview to interrupt normal family proceedings. (A copy of the interview is contained in Appendix A).

Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space. Following the family interview, a time was arranged for each family to complete the Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space. This activity is a task-oriented, projective technique developed by Mostwin (1974) and revised by Andreozzi (1978). The completion of this activity provides an actual map of the family system, depicting the various social networks (people, places, and things) that parents perceive influence their children's lives. This activity graphically shows the various social worlds in which children and parents function and how these social worlds are perceived to shape the lives of family members. When appropriate, and age permitting, each child was asked to draw a picture of "All the people you would like to have in your family." (A copy of the instructions for administering the Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space is

contained in Appendix B).

Mother-child observation. The next visit to each family entailed an observation of the mother and preschool children at home on an average weekday. This observation lasted for approximately two to three hours. Mothers were asked to select a day and a time that they considered to be part of their normal daily routine. Except for one instance when an older, 6-year old sister was present, older siblings and other adult family members were not present during this observation. Immediately following the observation, the Home Measurement of the Environment (HOME) was scored. HOME was developed by Elardo, Bradley, and Caldwell (1977) and has been used by early childhood researchers to measure the young child's home learning environment. HOME is intended to provide the researcher with a framework for observing and evaluating the range of social and physical experiences the young child is exposed to inside the family. (Scores on HOME are contained in Appendix C).

Family observation. The next time each family was observed was a time when the entire family was at home. Each family was asked to select a time that best typified a time when all family members were present. As it turned out, all observations were conducted during a weekday evening. The observation lasted anywhere from two to four hours depending on the family. In some cases, the observation was divided into two parts: once just prior to and immediately following the evening meal and once as the children were preparing to go to bed.

Final observation. The final observation consisted of a task-oriented family project. Each family was asked to devise a comfortable way of presenting to the researcher a picture of what their family world

was all about: how their family operated as a family. The content of this final observation was left entirely up for each family to decide how they would present their family to a person who, having little information on the day-to-day workings of their family, was interested in discovering as much as he could about how their particular family functions.

Follow-up. A follow-up telephone call was made approximately nine months after the final family observation. The intent of this telephone call was to arrange for a final visit with each family to discuss the study. At the time of this writing all the families had been contacted and nine family visits had been conducted. The remaining visits will take place after the completion of the dissertation. Although it has not been finalized, one possible plan for future research is to study these families longitudinally.

Recording Data.

All of the sessions were conducted in the homes of the families. All sessions were audiotaped. Anecdotal notes and running records of observations were also kept. The final session (task-oriented family project) was videotaped as well as audiotaped. Ancillary data were also obtained before and after the Family Interview and the Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space. For example, many of the families invited the researcher for dinner before they completed the Family Interview and/or the Family Life Space Drawing. When appropriate, family and parent-child interaction preceding, during, and following structured sessions were audiotaped. Anecdotal records of telephone

conversations were also kept. In sum, as much information concerning family life, regardless of the source of the information, was kept in order to obtain as much information as possible. Sometimes, it took two visits to complete a session or the family invited the researcher to participate in a special family function. Although these sessions were not considered part of the research format, they nevertheless provided the researcher with additional information on the families.

Organization and Analysis of Data.

As mentioned in Chapter I, the primary purpose of this dissertation was to see what kinds of family-level issues would be uncovered when the researcher naturalistically studied families with young children. The focus was on the young children. The focus was on the young child's family world, to describe the structure and function of the family system-child relationship. The level of data analysis was the family system-child relationship rather than the parent-child relationship. Accordingly, the findings presented in the following chapters reflect this perspective.

Analyzation of the data uncovered four family-level tasks that appeared to be generic to understanding the young child's relationship with the family system. The organization and functioning of this relationship seemed to entail establishing, maintaining, and evolving relationships at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. At the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem, family members also were observed resolving "Iness" and "Weness", and developing and validating personal subsystem images.

Unfortunately, time and methodological limitations prevented further in depth analyzation and quantification of these four family-level tasks. Nor was it possible to formally evaluate the effects that these tasks had on the young child's social and cognitive development. Also, it was beyond the scope of this dissertation to collect detailed data on the personal networks of adults and older siblings. A study of this magnitude would have required a more elaborate methodology, complete with a team of researchers.

Presentation of findings. To show how these four tasks operated in the 12 families, selected transcripts from naturalistic observations and task-oriented sessions are presented in Chapters V through IX. All four family-level tasks were found to be central to each of the families investigated. However, time and space limitations prevented an analysis of how each task functioned in each of the families. Thus, it was decided to illustrate each task with selected data from randomly assigned families.

Accordingly, relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems are discussed from data selected from the DiMaggio, St. Anne, and Fisher families. The young child's relationship at the level of the family unit subsystem is presented from data obtained from the Builder, Lancer, and Waverly families. Resolving "Iness" and Weness" is illustrated from observations made of the Nazareth and Mason families. Episodes drawn from the L'Campion and Cabana families are used to depict the task of developing and validating images. And, finally, illustrations from the Almeida and Williams families are presented to show the interrelationship among these four variables.

To insure that the data reflected typical family life and to guard against presenting data from certain families which seemed to best exemplify a particular variable, families were randomly chosen to illustrate an identified task. Careful attention was also given to choose data from each family that appeared to typify daily family life. Accordingly, the illustrations and comments that have been presented represent average, daily occurrences generic to the families studied. Every attempt has been made to refrain from presenting data that, although lending itself to interesting reading, did not reflect average family life as it was observed to occur in each of the families studied.

Before presenting the findings, a closer look at the families studied is in order. In Chapter IV, a brief descriptive profile of each family is presented.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWELVE FAMILIES

This chapter contains a brief descriptive profile of each of the families investigated. When studying families, however, one quickly realizes that social and physical descriptions, although helpful in familiarizing the reader with the population under study, can never accurately depict the gestalt of family life. As the researcher experienced in his study of these families, the essence of family life is much more than the simple description of its parts. Thus, the following family profiles are in no way intended to communicate the intimacy expressed in each family's psychosocial interior life-space. The sole purpose of these profiles is to provide the reader with a greater familiarity of the families studied.

The DiMaggio Family.

Mrs. and Mr. DiMaggio were the parents of two daughters, Michelle, age 6, and Linda, age 2 1/2.[2] Mrs. DiMaggio was 28 and Mr. DiMaggio was 29. They had been married for seven years. Mrs. DiMaggio's widowed father, Dominic, also lived with the family. Dominic was a 65-year old, retired laborer who immigrated to this country from Italy when he was very young.

The DiMaggios lived in a six-room, two-story house owned by Dominic. The house was located in an urban, Italian-American, working-

[2]Ages, number of years married, and other demographic characteristics for all the subjects were calculated at the time the study began.

class neighborhood. Mr. DiMaggio had spent a substantial amount of time and energy renovating both the interior and exterior of the house. Many of the other tenements on the street were in dire need of renovations. Although there was no front lawn, there was a very large fenced-in backyard replete with a vegetable garden, a small above ground swimming pool, and a swing and a jungle gym, that was set in a wood chip base.

Mrs. DiMaggio grew up in the house that she and her family were living in. After completing high school, she received training as an X-ray technician and was employed part-time on weekends in a local hospital. She was an only child. Her mother died 11 years ago, and when her father became ill two years after she was married, she and her husband decided to move back into her father's home. Although Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio had been able to save money by moving into her father's house, living with Dominic had created some adjustment problems, especially between Mr. DiMaggio and Dominic. However, this living arrangement, for the most part, worked for the mutual benefit of all parties involved.

Mr. DiMaggio was a second generation Italian American. Although he completed only the ninth grade in school, Mr. DiMaggio received electronics training in the Army and had worked in the electronics field for the last seven years. His parents, who lived only a few minutes away, were the owners of a small meat market. Mr. DiMaggio had an unmarried brother who lived in a tenement above his parents, a married sister who had two young children and lived close-by, and a younger sister who was mentally retarded and lived at home with her parents.

Mrs. DiMaggio was a practicing Catholic while Mr. DiMaggio attended

church only on special occasions. Michelle was enrolled in the first grade of the local parish grammar school. However, Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio were seriously considering sending her to the neighborhood public school the following Fall. Mrs. DiMaggio was also looking for an inexpensive local nursery school to enroll Linda in when she turned three. Unfortunately, she had little success finding a preschool that was within walking distance and that was inexpensive.

The Fisher Family.

The Fishers had been married twelve years. Mr. Fisher was 33 and Mrs. Fisher was 35. The Fishers had three children, Kathy, age 6, Carl, age 4, and Jimmy, age 13 months. The Fishers lived in a middle-class suburb. They had owned their up-and-down Cape house for the past six years. Although the house was located near other similarly constructed houses, the fenced-in backyard afforded the children ample recreational space. The well-kept interior consisted of a fairly large kitchen, dining room, living room, and a winterized back porch which served also as a playroom. The three bedrooms and bathroom were located upstairs. The cellar had been converted into a playroom for the children.

Mr. Fisher had his masters degree in elementary education and had been employed for six years as a sixth grade teacher in an elementary school located a few blocks from the Fisher home. Mr. Fisher's father, himself a retired school teacher and athletic coach, live nearby. Mr. Fisher's mother died just before he was to be married. Mr. Fisher had an older sister who was married and had two children.

Mrs. Fisher came from New Jersey where her mother and father resided. She had one older, married brother and he lived with his family in the Midwest. Mrs. Fisher had a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education. She worked for three years in the same school system in which Mr. Fisher was now employed. At the time of the study, Mrs. Fisher was founder and co-director of a successful playschool located approximately five miles from her home. She had been co-director of this playgroup for two years.

Kathy and Carl attended the same school where their father taught. Kathy was in the second grade and Carl was attending kindergarten. Jimmy stayed with a neighbor three mornings a week while his mother taught preschool.

The Fisher's were converts to the Episcopalian religion. Mrs. Fisher, a second generation Italian American, was reared in the Roman Catholic faith while Mr. Fisher, a fourth generation Anglo-Saxon, was reared Protestant. The Fishers decided to become Episcopalian when Kathy was born. Before that time they were not affiliated with any organized religion.

The St. Anne Family.

Mr. and Mrs. St. Anne had been married for 14 years. Mr. St. Anne was 36 and Mrs. St. Anne was 34. They had two children, Mary, age 5 and Eddy, age 6. The St. Anne family lived on the first floor of a well-kept, two-story tenement located in an urban Italian American neighborhood. The house was owned by Mrs. St. Anne's mother, who with her second husband, her first husband having died when Mrs. St. Anne

was a junior in high school, lived on the second floor. Like the tenements in this neighborhood, the house was squeezed in between adjacent wooden tenements. Although the house did not have a front lawn, there was a small grass backyard that was bounded by a chain fence. Their tenement consisted of a large kitchen, two medium sized bedrooms, a large double parlor, formal dining room, and a small bathroom between the two bedrooms.

Mr. St. Anne quit high school at the age of 15, never getting past junior high school. He was employed as a non-skilled jewelry worker. He had moved around at a number of jewelry jobs. At the time of the study he had recently changed jobs and continued at the same jewelry shop for the duration of the study. Mr. St. Anne was reared in a foster family for most of his childhood and reported that at times he was the recipient of physical abuse. Although he still referred to his foster parents as "mom" and "dad", he maintained a distant relationship with his foster parents. Mr. St. Anne's biological mother was still alive and he visited her on Christmas and Easter. He did not consider her his mother and the children did not consider her their grandmother. Mr. St. Anne's biological parents were French Canadian but his foster parents were of Anglo-Saxon origin. Although raised a Protestant, he had recently converted to Roman Catholicism.

Mrs. St. Anne completed the 11th grade in high school and then dropped out to help support the family when her father died. She occasionally performed part-time jewelry work for her step-father. Her step-father operated a small casting firm in the basement of the tenement. Mrs. St. Anne's parents were first generation Italians. She had

lived in this neighborhood for most of her life. She was a practicing Catholic and sent her daughter to the neighborhood parochial school.

The Builder Family.

Mr. and Mrs. Builder and their two sons, William and Floyd, were involved in an interesting venture: they were building their house while living there. The house was a two-story, nine-room colonial located in a semi-rural community. The house-building project had been going on for four years and nearing completion. Although Mr. Builder had performed most of the actual work, everyone had cooperated, making this truly a family project. Prior to this, the Builders had lived in an apartment for the first four years of marriage.

Mrs. Builder was 35 years old and held a degree in history from a local Ivy League school. After graduating from college, she pursued a teaching career, teaching fourth grade for four years. When she and her husband began having a family, Mrs. Builder devoted her full attention to becoming a mother and housewife. She did, however, intend to pursue some type of career once her two sons became older. Her husband felt that she had a talent for writing and was actively encouraging her to develop her writing skills.

Mrs. Builder was the youngest of three children and the only person in her extended family that graduated from college. Her parents were first generation Italian American and were both deceased. Mrs. Builder regarded her older sister as a second mother. Although Mrs. Builder openly admitted that she and her sister had different life styles, she felt that they had a close relationship.

Mr. Builder was 39 years old. He came from a German-English family background. His family had settled in this country four generations ago. Both his parents were living, and Mr. Builder had the deepest respect for them, especially his father whom Mr. Builder emulated. Mr. Builder earned an undergraduate degree in business administration and had been employed for 10 years as a materials engineer at a nearby engineering firm. His two younger sisters and brother were college graduates.

William Builder was 7 years old and attended the first grade at a nearby public school. Floyd Builder was 4 years old and had been attending a playgroup three mornings a week for the past two years. Although Mr. and Mrs. Builder did not subscribe to an organized religion, they were in the process of deciding what denomination of Christianity they intended to become affiliated with.

The Lancer Family.

Mr. and Mrs. Lancer met and were married while Mr. Lancer was in medical school, and Mrs. Lancer was in nursing school. They had been married for six years and had two sons, Jamie, who was almost 4, and Tommy, age 13 months. The Lancers had just moved into their new house, a spacious two-floor, nine-room colonial located in an upper-middle-class suburb. The house was situated on a fairly large piece of land, providing the children with more than enough outdoor play space.

Mrs. Lancer was 29, and of French Canadian descent. She maintained a close relationship with her parents and her recently married younger sister. Her parents lived some 20 miles away in the same predominantly French Canadian community where Mrs. Lancer spent her childhood. After

graduating from nursing school, Mrs. Lancer worked for five years as a registered nurse in a large hospital. When she and her husband decided to plan a family, Mrs. Lancer gave up her nursing position to devote full attention to her children. Just recently, however, she had decided to assist her husband three mornings a week in his new primary care medical practice.

Mr. Lancer was 29 years old, and was the only child in a family of Anglo-Saxon background. His childhood was spent in Pennsylvania and in Florida, where his parents now resided. He came to Rhode Island to attend college and, later, medical school. Upon completing his medical training, Mr. Lancer was employed for three years in a walk-in, private emergency room. This past year he opened his own medical practice in addition to working part-time in an urban hospital emergency room.

Mr. Lancer was a recent convert to the Roman Catholic faith. Both he and his wife attended church regularly and considered their religious faith to be very important to their marital and family relationships. Jamie attended a nearby playgroup three mornings a week. Mrs. Lancer had made child care arrangements for Tommy at the home of a neighbor three mornings a week, while she assisted in her husband's medical practice.

The Waverly Family.

Mr. and Mrs. Waverly had been married for 15 years. They had four children: Roberta 8, Lisa 7, Jennifer 4, and R.J. 2. The Waverlys moved to their new Cape home three years ago. Prior to this move they lived in a three-story tenement in which Mrs. Waverly's family occupied

the two remaining floors. The tenement was located in an urban Italian American neighborhood where Mrs. Waverly grew up.

Their new home consisted of a formal dining and living room, an eat-in kitchen, all on the first floor, and three bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor. In addition, Mr. Waverly converted the above-ground cellar into a large family recreation room. This room led into a spacious backyard in which Mr. Waverly constructed a large, in-ground swimming pool.

Mr. Waverly was 41 years old. He was raised in a foster family in Delaware. He did not remember much of his biological father, having met him only once, and biological mother was deceased. His brother and two sisters were raised in different foster nomes located in different geographical parts of the United States. Mr. Waverly never completed high school and entered the Navy when he was 18. After completing his four years in the Navy, Mr. Waverly worked as a short order cook in Florida. When he married, he completed an apprenticeship in stone masonry, a trade that he worked at for the past 12 years. Although raised in a Protestant foster family, Mr. Waverly converted to the Roman Catholic religion when he was married and considered himself to be a practicing Catholic.

Mrs. Waverly grew up in an Italian American extended family, complete with grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins. She continued to maintain close ties with her extended family, especially with her parents and sister and with her grandmother until her death the year before. Upon graduating from high school, Mrs. Waverly was employed as a secretary. She worked as a secretary during the first few years of marriage

but became a full-time mother and housewife with the birth of Roberta, her eldest child. Like her husband, Mrs. Waverly was a devout Catholic.

Roberta and Lisa attended a parochial elementary school. Roberta was in the fourth grade and Lisa was in the second grade. Jennifer attended a playschool three afternoons a week while R.J. stayed home with his mother.

The Nazareth Family.

The Nazareth household consisted of Mr. Nazareth, who was 38 years old, Mrs. Nazareth who was 34, and their sons, Luke, age 7 and John who was 4 1/2. The Nazareths owned a three-decked tenement in an ethnically mixed inner-city neighborhood. The family lived in the four-room, first floor tenement, renting out the second and third floor tenements. The house itself was fairly old and in need of minor repairs. Mr. Nazareth had applied for a HUD low-income, home improvement loan to finance the necessary renovations. At the completion of the study, the loan was approved and repairs on the house were initiated.

Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth had been married for 13 years. Mrs. Nazareth was a high school graduate and prior to and during the first four years of married life she had been employed in a number of general office jobs. When she began her family, she decided to devote full-time to her housewife responsibilities. Outside of her immediate family, the most important relationships in her life were her relationship with her mother and her relationship with her spiritual development via membership in the Charismatic sect of the Roman Catholic Church. Mrs. Nazareth was raised in an Irish-Catholic home and had become very involved in all aspects of

the Roman Catholic religion.

Mr. Nazareth's ethnic background was second generation Italian American. Like his wife, he also was a devout Roman Catholic. However, his relationship with his parents and his younger sister was full of conflict and emotional pain. The Nazareth's did not get along with Mr. Nazareth's family of origin. After dropping out of high school to help support his family, Mr. Nazareth eventually joined the Army where he received training in electronics. While in the Army he earned his high school diploma and after his discharge enrolled in courses at a local junior college until his G.I. benefits expired. For the past 12 years, Mr. Nazareth had been employed in the television repair department at a large department store.

Luke and John attended the local parochial school. Luke was enrolled in the second grade and John had just begun kindergarten. In order to pay for their school tuition, Mr. Nazareth performed janitorial work for the church in return for his sons' tuition.

The Mason Family.

Ten years of marriage had brought Mr. and Mrs. Mason three children, Mary 8, Robbie 4, and Lori 18 months. The Masons owned a comfortable duplex home in a prosperous suburb. The house had eight rooms and a spacious backyard, that was fenced in by trees. Although the house was located in a suburban neighborhood, its location on a dead end street, away from adjacent homes, gave the family a sense of privacy. Toward the end of the study, Mr. Mason decided to remodel the above-ground cellar into a family room and a study. The Masons had lived in this neighborhood for eight years, five in a smaller house located a few

streets away and the last three years in their present house.

Mr. Mason, a lawyer, was 31 years old. He was raised in a nearby suburban city where his mother and father still lived. Mr. Mason's father owned a small insurance company. Mr. Mason was the oldest of five children, two of whom were adolescents and still lived at home. He maintained a close relationship with his parents, especially his father whom he viewed as friend and advisor on personal and financial matters. Mr. Mason was Irish-Catholic and considered his religion to be an important part of his life.

Mrs. Mason, age 31, was also a practicing Irish-Catholic. She originally came from New Jersey where her married brother and sister still lived. Mrs. Mason's mother recently passed away and her father died when she was 9 years old. Although her mother remarried when Mrs. Mason was in high school, she did not maintain a close relationship with her stepfather.

Mrs. Mason attended art school and worked in advertising while she helped finance her husband's law education. She had intermittently worked part time for a doctor since she'd been married and intended to embark on a career in the human services once the children became a little older.

Mary, the eldest child, attended the fourth grade in a nearby public school. Robbie had been attending a play group three mornings a week for the past two years. Next year he was to enroll in the public school kindergarten. Lori, the youngest Mason child, stayed home with her mother.

The L'Campion Family.

Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion and their daughters, Patti, age 4 1/2, and Janice, age 2 years and 4 months, had just moved into their own six-room ranch house. The house was located in a newly developed middle-income neighborhood. Although the house was just large enough to accommodate a family of four, the cellar had been converted into a large playroom and a work area and the large spacious fenced-in backyard provided the children with ample outdoor play space.

Mrs. L'Campion, age 26, held an undergraduate degree in secondary teaching. Since marriage five years before, Mrs. L'Campion had remained home with the children. At the time of the study, however, a teaching position in social studies had become available at the same school where Mr. L'Campion taught. After much thought, Mrs. L'Campion had decided to take the position.

Mr. L'Campion was 35 years old. He had been employed as a secondary school mathematics teacher for the preceding eight years. Mr. L'Campion held undergraduate and masters degrees in electrical engineering.

Both Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion come from French Canadian families where French was often spoken in the home. Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion's parents and maternal grandparents were alive and lived close-by. Mr. L'Campion made it a point to take his daughters to visit their great grandparents at least twice a month. Although raised a Roman Catholic, Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion did not attend church but planned to have their children raised as Roman Catholic when they became of age.

Patti attended nursery school three mornings a week and planned to enroll in the local public kindergarten in the Fall. While Mrs.

L'Campion was at work, child care arrangements for Janice had been arranged with the neighbor across the street.

The Cabana Family.

Ten years of marriage had brought Mr. and Mrs. Cabana two preschool age sons, Steve and Marty, and a large, nine-room colonial house located in a newly developed upper-middle-class neighborhood. The bedrooms, kitchen, formal dining room, living room and a large bath were located on the upper-level. Downstairs was divided into a large family room, complete with fireplace, stereo, and bathroom. Adjacent to the family room was a medium sized playroom, equipped with a wide variety of educational materials. The large fenced-in backyard contained a number of large muscle apparatus.

Mr. Cabana, age 33, was the oldest of two sons from a second generation Italian American working class family. He had attended business college but had decided to take over the family's grocery business full-time the semester he was to graduate. This decision to manage the grocery business, a job which he had worked at since adolescence, was made solely for financial reasons. His college advisor told Mr. Cabana that he could earn better wages in the grocery business than he could in the business world with just an undergraduate degree. The only drawback managing the grocery business was the long hours Mr. Cabana was required to spend at the store, sometimes as much as 60 hours a week.

Mrs. Cabana came from an ethnically mixed family background. Her father was southern Anglo-Saxon and her mother was part Irish and Italian. Mrs. Cabana was 32 years old. She earned an Associate of Arts degree in

secretarial science/accounting and worked a few years in an office before she was married. Once married, she became a full-time housewife and had no immediate plans to return to work.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Cabana's parents and Mr. Cabana's maternal grandparents lived nearby. Mrs. Cabana's parents were very active in the lives of Steve and Marty. However, Mrs. Cabana and her parents maintained an emotionally distant relationship, the origins of which dated back to Mrs. Cabana's childhood. As a result, the maternal grandparents had not developed a close relationship with their two grandchildren.

Steve, age 4, attended a playschool three mornings a week. The preceding year he had attended the same playschool two mornings a week. Mrs. Cabana had already registered Marty, age 2, for the same playschool when he turned 3. Although Mr. and Mrs. Cabana were concerned with their sons' religious education, they had not yet decided what Christian denomination they would become affiliated with.

The Williams Family.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams had been married for eight years. They have two children, Kathy, age 4, and William, who was born during the time of the study.

The Williams owned a seven-room, two-story Cape Cod house located in a middle-income suburb. During the course of the study, Mr. Williams remodeled the attic into two small children's bedrooms. This extra space, along with the medium sized, fenced-in backyard complete with an above ground swimming pool, afforded the children ample indoor and outdoor play space.

Mrs. Williams attended the same state university that her husband graduated from. It was there that she met her husband, dropping out after her freshman year. She worked thereafter as a dental assistant for five years. She terminated her position shortly after being married. Mrs. Williams' parents were second generation Swedish English. Her father had been deceased for little over a year. Her mother lived by herself and worked as a teacher's aide in the same school system in which Mr. Williams was employed. Mrs. Williams had an older, married brother who lived about 30 minutes away with his wife and two young children.

Mr. Williams earned an undergraduate degree in business. He was employed as a high school vocational education teacher, a position he had held for the preceding two years. Prior to entering the teaching profession, Mr. Williams had worked in his father's small construction business until his father had retired. Mr. Williams still operated the business as a second job to supplement his teaching salary. His parents were first generation Italian American. His mother and father were retired and living with Mr. Williams' older sister and her family.

Mr. Williams was raised a Roman Catholic; Mrs. Williams was raised as a Baptist. However, they had both converted to the Lutheran religion and regularly attended the nearby Lutheran Church. Kathy Williams had been attending a local playschool three mornings a week for the previous two years.

The Almeida Family.

The Almeida family owned a three-story tenement in an urban,

ethnically mixed neighborhood. They lived on the second floor and Mr. Almeida's widowed mother lived on the first floor. Like most of the houses on the street, the tenement was well kept and had been recently renovated. There was a small fenced-in yard in the back and across the street was a playground. Mr. Almeida had lived in this house since he was 15; however, he and his wife had been looking to buy a house somewhere in the country. Mrs. Almeida found that six rooms was just too small for growing children. Despite the lack of physical living space, Mrs. Almeida was able to creatively make use of every inch of physical space.

Mr. and Mrs. Almeida had been married for nine years. After graduating from high school, Mr. Almeida turned down a college football scholarship and became a licensed plumber, a trade that he had worked at since marriage. His parents immigrated to this country from Italy when they were young. His father, a painter by trade, was deceased; his mother lived in the first floor tenement. Mr. Almeida had an older sister and a younger brother both of whom were married and living nearby with their families.

Mrs. Almeida was 30 years old. She was first generation Portuguese and Greek. Her mother and father were divorced when she was very young. Her mother worked all her life to support Mrs. Almeida and her younger brother. Mrs. Almeida's mother still worked and lived in the same house in which Mrs. Almeida was raised. After graduating from high school, Mrs. Almeida was employed by a large supermarket but quit soon after she was married to become a full-time mother and wife.

Mr. and Mrs. Almeida were both Roman Catholics. Mrs. Almeida was

a devout Catholic; however, Mr. Almeida attended church only on special occasions such as the baptism of his new daughter, Gina, who was born during the course of the study. The three other Almeida children attended the local parochial school. Dominic, age 7, was in the second grade, and Anthony, age 5, and Judy, age 4 1/2, attended kindergarten.

A Note on Presentation.

In the chapters to follow, illustrations selected from the stream of ongoing family living as well as excerpts from interviews and task-oriented activities are presented in order to exemplify the four family-level tasks uncovered in this study. As noted earlier, these illustrations represent typical family life occurrences. Episodes which appeared atypical and in any way exaggerated enactments of family life as observed in the families investigated, although such incidents might certainly make for more interesting reading, were purposefully omitted.

The author also recognizes that these illustrations lend themselves to a variety of interpretations. Depending upon one's particular theoretical perspective, the reader might justifiably desire to imbue these episodes with his or her personal insight. Such interpretations are certainly welcomed. However, the primary purpose of these illustrations was to identify and describe the central four family-level tasks uncovered in the ecological study of 12 families, to show how these tasks operated in every day family life and how they mediated the family system-child relationship. Any further analyzation of the data collected and presented was beyond the scope of this dissertation.

CHAPTER V

ESTABLISHING INTERPERSONAL SUBSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS

In the families studied, the young child was observed establishing and developing relationships with family members on two levels: at the level of interpersonal subsystems and at the level of the family unit subsystem. The family system-child relationship was observed and defined in this dissertation as the young child's continuous movement back and forth between and among a variety of dyadic and polyadic family relationships. The family system-child relationship entailed the young child's relationship with family members on three levels: the personal subsystem (the individual in the family), interpersonal subsystems (dyadic and polyadic relationships), and the family unit subsystem (the entire household). The family system itself is conceptualized in this study as the interface of the personal subsystem with interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem.

Although all family members were involved in a number of interpersonal subsystem and family unit subsystem relationships, the focus in this and the proceeding chapter is on the young child's development of relationships at the respective levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem.

Theoretical Background.

A commonly held assumption among child development researchers who have investigated the parent-child relationship is the view that the child's unique temperament and personality affect the manner in which other family members, as well as teachers and peers, approach and interact with the child. Thus, the child is seen as actively influencing

his environment. Child and social environment are seen as engaged in a mutual process of transforming each other within the daily events of family living (Learner & Spanier, 1978; Lewis & Lee-Painter, 1974; Sameroff, 1975). Viewed within the above framework, the child's unique psychobiological individuality is seen as an expression of, and expressed in, the unique individualities or profiles of other family members. As Hess and Handel (1974) stated: "The intrapsychic organization of each member is part of the psychosocial structure of his family; the structure of a family includes the intrapsychic organization of its individual members" (p. 3.).

Kantor and Lehr (1975) have shown that each family member, in this case the child, establishes several identities inside the family, "We's" and an "I." As a member of various interpersonal subsystems (e.g., mother-child-father, child-child, and grandmother-child-mother), the young child shares a collective responsibility with other subsystem members for maintaining a variety of "We's" or "Weness." While establishing and maintaining subsystem memberships inside the family, the child is also a self, a personal subsystem equipped with psychobiological potentials. When viewing the child's development inside the family, it is essential to ask whether the child's behavior is a function of a particular subsystem or whether the behavior is a function of the child's unique psychobiological profile, or a function of both.

The young child, as do all family members, establishes a number of interpersonal subsystem relationships. These relationships change over time and also develop their own characteristic pattern of interaction or what Minuchin (1974) referred to as "complementarity and mutual

accommodations." To quote Minuchin:

> The subsystem organization of a family provides valuable training in the process of maintaining the differentiated "I am" while exercising interpersonal skills at different levels...The boundaries of a subsystem are the rules defining who participates and how. (p. 53.)

In this dissertation, relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems provided the researcher with close-up shots depicting the young child's daily transactions with parents, grandparents, siblings, and other relatives. These particular interpersonal subsystem relationships were seen as exerting a cumulative influence on the developing child.

Two Patterns of Subsystem Relationships.

In each family, the young child was observed engaging in a variety of interpersonal subsystem relationships. Even in those families where the mother was the primary caregiver, the young child was still observed to be involved in other meaningful relationships with family members. Although at times subsystem relationships appeared to function independently, as when Mrs. Mason prepared lunch for her 18 month old daughter Lori, interaction involving one subsystem usually existed at interface with at least one other subsystem. While Mrs. Mason fed Lori, her four-year old son Robbie entered the kitchen, sat down at the table, and asked for his lunch. Thus, in this episode at least two interpersonal subsystem relationships were observed operating: mother-children and child-child subsystems.

At first glance, the most obvious and salient relationship at the level of interpersonal subsystems was the young child's relationship

with her mother. All of the children in the families studied appeared to have developed an emotionally strong relationship with their mothers. When viewed closer and over an extended period of time, however, the relationship that the young child was establishing with her mother was seen somewhat differently.

Analyzation of the data at the level of interpersonal subsystems uncovered two general patterns. One pattern was for the mother-child relationship to emerge as the predominant caregiving relationship at the level of interpersonal subsystem functioning. In such families, the young child's relationship with other family members served to complement the mother-child relationship. The other pattern that emerged was for the young child to establish equally salient and primary caregiver relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems with a number of family members. In such families, the young child was observed establishing primary caregiver relationships with mothers and fathers, and occasionally with grandparents or even an older sibling.

Subsystem relationships in the 12 families. In the Williams, the Cabana, the Mason, The St. Anne, and the Almeida families, the mother-child interpersonal subsystem relationship was, to various degrees, the dominant caregiver relationship. Other family relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems functioned to complement and enrich the young child's relationship with his mother.

Thus, Robbie and Lori Mason spent a great deal of time with their older sister and with their father and paternal grandparents. In fact, Mary Mason was cared for by her paternal grandmother during the first four years of her life while Mrs. Mason worked to help finance her

husband's law school education. When Mrs. Mason recently went to work evenings, Mr. Mason took over the child rearing responsibilities.

Steve and Marty Cabana were observed to spend most of their days home with their mother. When Mr. Cabana came home from work, however, the father-child subsystem became the primary relationship for Steve and Marty. On the weekends, especially Sundays, Mr. Cabana made it a point to spend as much time with his two sons as he possibly could.

Kathy Williams, until the birth of her infant brother Billy, was the only child in the lives of her parents. As a result, Kathy developed a very close relationship with her mother. Since Mr. Williams spent an inordinate amount of time at work, the relationship that existed between Kathy and her mother appeared to be the most influential relationship in Kathy's life. With the birth of Billy, however, interpersonal subsystem relationships took on new transformations in the Williams family. Kathy developed a close caregiver relationship with Billy. Moreover, after Mr. Williams decided to spend more time at home, Kathy and her father were observed to spend more time together, changing the quality of their relationship.

Dominic, Anthony and Judy Almeida developed a close sibling subsystem relationship. The Almeida sibling subsystem appeared to exert a strong influence on the Almeida children independent of parental influence. Gina Almeida, the newest member of the family, besides having her mother care for her, was observed to receive a great deal of secondary care and stimulation from her brothers and sister as well as from her father.

Parallel to their relationship with their respective mothers, the

children in the Waverly, Fisher, DiMaggio, Builder, L'Campion, Nazareth, and Lancer families were observed to develop intimate and primary caregiver relationships with their fathers, with a grandparent or grandparents, and, in some cases, with an older sibling. Although one particular relationship might, at a certain point in time, have been more influential than another, all of these relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems appeared to be cumulatively exerting, depending on the particular family, an influence on the child's development.

To describe the breadth and depth of interpersonal subsystem relationships, three families were randomly selected to illustrate the young child's relationship at the level of interpersonal subsystems. Because of space limitations, episodes have been selected from the Fisher family, the St. Anne family, and the DiMaggio family.

A note on organization. The following episodes are intended to point out the variety of relationships the young child was observed establishing at the level of interpersonal subsystems. As can be gleaned from the illustrations presented, the mother-child subsystem in the St. Anne family represented the pattern identified as a dominant mother-child relationship complemented with other less salient yet nevertheless meaningful relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems. On the other hand, in the Fisher and DiMaggio families the pattern described as establishing a variety of equally salient interpersonal subsystem relationships is presented.

Although no attempt was made to interpret the various interpersonal subsystem relationships according to various personality theories, the reader may certainly want to imbue these illustrations with his own

interpretations. Such interpretations are welcomed but must be viewed with caution. When studying family system-child relations, behavioral excerpts only present a partial picture of what is actually occurring and what a particular behavior means inside a particular family system or even within a particular subsystem. Interpretations of behavior that are not based upon a complete picture of the social context in which the behavior is embedded can often be misleading. And, lastly, the reader must also guard against allowing subjective feelings concerning family life, feelings that sometimes emanate from one's own family life, interfere with interpreting what appears to be similar experiences in the families presented in this study.

Parent-Child Subsystem

One of the most significant observations made was that children in the families studied were involved in meaningful relationships not only with their mothers but also with their fathers. Father-child, mother-child, and father-mother-child subsystem relationships provided Carl Fisher, Eddy St. Anne, and Linda DiMaggio with a variety of experiences that, in their own special way, seemed to be exerting an impact on their lives. Within the social space of the mother-child, father-child, and father-mother-child subsystems, Carl, Eddy, and Linda were afforded the opportunity to experience uniquely different relationships and experiences.

The Fisher Family.

As reflected in their Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 1), Mr. and Mrs. Fisher shared the same child rearing philosophy. They were, for the

Fig. 1. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Fisher.

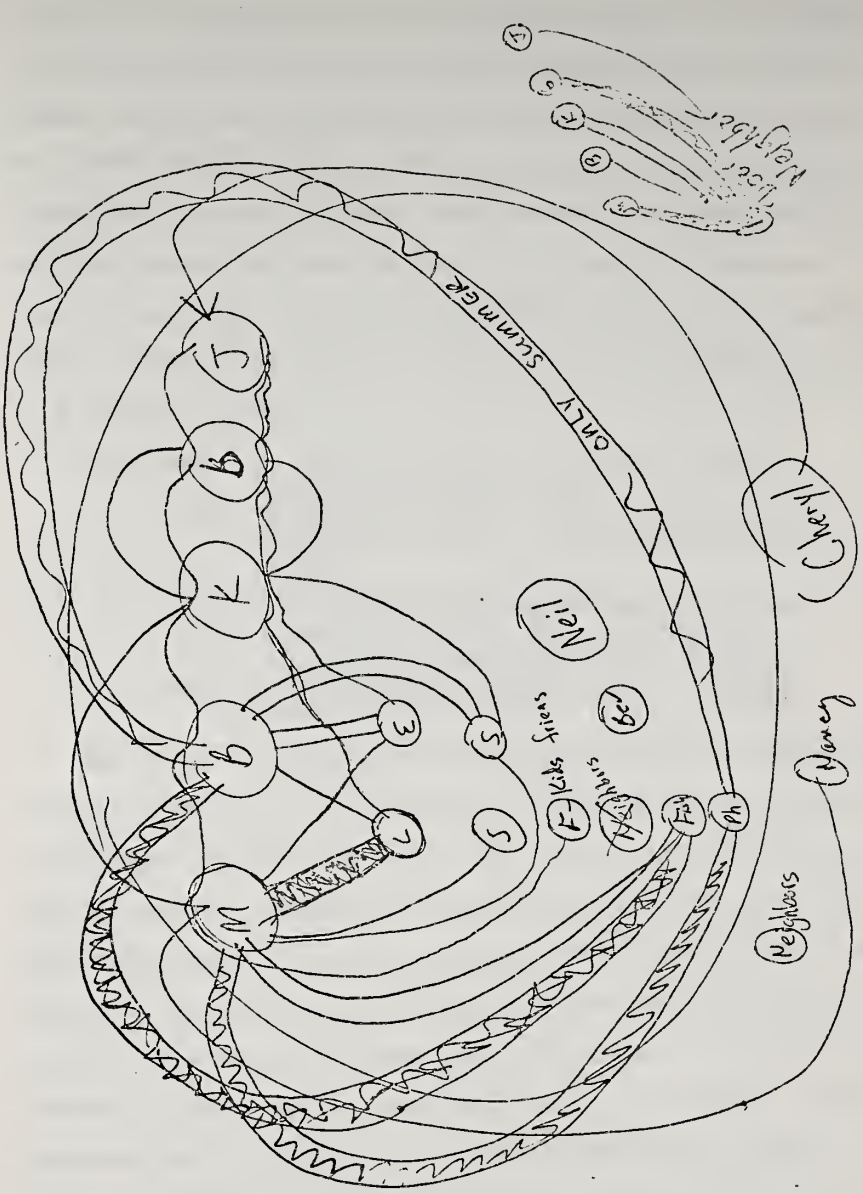

only summer
Neighbors
Nancy
Cheryl
Kids friends
Neighbors
Neighbors

Figure 1

most part, in agreement on what they expected from their three children, what goals they held for them, and what strategies they were going to employ to help each child develop his or her potentialities. However, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher displayed different interactional styles when they interacted with their children. These different subsystem psychosocial profiles provided the Fisher children with a variety of experiences depending upon what subsystem they were functioning in at the moment. These different subsystem styles were pointed out in comments made by Carl and Kathy Fisher.

Interviewer: Is there a difference in the way your mother and father take care of you?
Kathy: My mother says I can't stay up late. My father always lets me. Mommy gives all the orders.
Carl: Daddy let's us do most things.
Kathy: Yes. She tells us to go to bed at 7:30. My father always lets us stay up 'til 8:00.
Carl: 'Cause tonight there's going to be a special.
Kathy: She wouldn't give us two chances. My father gives you three or four.

When the Fisher children were alone with their mother, either separately or collectively, they experienced a subsystem relationship that was characteristically instructive. Mrs. Fisher, an early childhood playgroup teacher, attempted to provide her children with educational experiences whenever time and situation permitted. Whether the situation was one of learning how to get along with a peer, teaching language skills, or learning how to stack blocks, Mrs. Fisher structured such experiences to ensure maximum educational benefits. Mr. Fisher, although concerned about his children's intellectual development, offered his children a different subsystem experience. Whereas Mrs. Fisher directly instructed her children in a variety of thinking and language skills,

Mr. Fisher manifested a more easy going, indirect subtle interactional style. The different subsystem profiles and experiences were observed in the following episodes.

Mother-children. Carl's friend Adam has just arrived. As Carl and Adam were about to leave to go outside and play, Mrs. Fisher gave the following instructions:

> You're not to go anywhere but in the backyard, Amy's and down to Kathy's and that's all. And do not go over to Adam's house. Don't go anywhere without telling me where you're going to be. Stay in the backyard. As a matter of fact, that would be nice. And if you get cold, here's tissue to wipe your nose. If it gets cold, you can go down the cellar.

Carl and Adam went outside to play. Mrs. Fisher then proceeded to take Jimmy out with her onto the winterized porch. As she watched a noon-time game show on television, she stacked blocks with Jimmy.

> Mrs. F: (Sits on the floor stacking blocks with Jimmy.) One, two, three. Jimmy, do it.
> Jimmy: (Picks up a block and attempts to place it on the block Mrs. Fisher has arranged.)
> Mrs. F: One, two, that's it. One, two, three. (Block falls down.) All fall down.

Father-children. Mr. Fisher had taken care of the children all evening while Mrs. Fisher attended a class at a nearby college. Before the children watched the Peanuts' television special, Mr. Fisher had them change into their pajamas. He took his three children upstairs to prepare for bed. Kathy went into her room and Carl and Jimmy remained with their father in the bedroom that they shared.

> Carl: (Looks over at his father.) Who are you?
> Mr. F: Mr. Daddy
> Carl: (Talks to Kathy in the next room.) Who are you?
> Kathy: Daddy, you're not Mr. Daddy. (Walks into where her father and brothers are.)
> Mr. F: (Comments on the fact that Kathy has changed

into her pajamas.) Kathy's the fastest in the Westest. Right, Kathy?
Carl: (Struggles to get into his pajamas.)
Mr. F: Try harder. (Looks over at Jimmy.) Jimmy has pretty shoes. (Mimmicks sound Jimmy is making.) What's Kathy doing? (Looks at Jimmy and over to Kathy.)
Carl: (Starts to become frustrated at not being able to put the bottoms of his pajamas on.)
Mr. F: (Looks over at Carl.) Relax there.
Carl: Can you get my 'jamies on?
Mr. F: Well, let me see. You try first. If you have trouble with it, Daddy will help you. (Starts to change Jimmy.) Jimmy has to have three diapers.

As the above two brief episodes illustrate, relationships at the level of the father-children and mother-children subsystems were characterized in the Fisher family by distinguishing psychosocial profiles. When with their mother, the Fisher children were exposed to direct teaching and caregiving activities. A somewhat different experience occurred when the Fisher children were with their father. The father-children subsystem was characterized by a more relaxed and playful style of interaction. Although manifesting different psychosocial profiles, relationships at the level of the mother-children and father-children subsystem nevertheless appeared to possess equal saliency in shaping the development of the Fisher children

The DiMaggio Family.

There were observable differences in the father-children and mother-children subsystems as well as differences in the relationship that Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio had with each of their two daughters, Michelle and Linda. Whereas, Mrs. DiMaggio, like Mrs. Fisher, tended to engage in more caretaking and direct teaching activities with Linda and, to a

lesser extent Michelle, Mr. DiMaggio tended to engage in more disciplinary behaviors, especially with Linda, and manifested a more playful and competitive interactional style when dealing with Michelle. Mr. DiMaggio appeared to enjoy competing with Michelle in a wide variety of games. They played checkers, scrabble, backgammon, and a host of games that Mr. DiMaggio was constantly purchasing.

Father-child subsystem. A typical example of the kind of interaction that occurred between Mr. DiMaggio and his 6-year old daughter Michelle was observed during a Sunday afternoon checker game.

Michelle: (Studies the checker board.) Where'd you move?
Mr. D: From here to there. (Points to the square where he moved.)
Michelle: (Studies her father's move then makes a move.)
Mr. D: (Quickly jumps two of his daughter's checkers.) Your turn. Look good before you move a checker.
Michelle: (About to move a checker.)
Mr. D: Take it back. Now, look again. Michelle!
Michelle: (Studies the possible moves she can make and then proceeds to move her checker.)
Mr. D: Keep going. That's a double jump. See it? (Points.) Take that guy off, see? (Points with his finger.) As long as you've got the space.
Michelle: (Moves a checker.)
Mr. D: Pay attention. (Makes a move.) King me!
Michelle: This guy can't hurt me. (Makes another move.)
Mr. D: No! But this guy can. (Points to his checker and then jumps one of Michelle's checkers.)
Michelle: Oh no! (Sits back in her chair.)
Mr. D: Your turn.

Mother-child subsystem. Although Mrs. DiMaggio also displayed a sense of enjoyment and subtle humor when caring for her children, she, when compared to her husband, performed more of a direct teaching and

caregiver function. Mrs. DiMaggio's teaching style appeared to complement her husband's more relaxed and humorous interactional style. The following episode reflected Mrs. DiMaggio's style of interaction. In this scene, she was playing a word and concept recognition game with Linda.

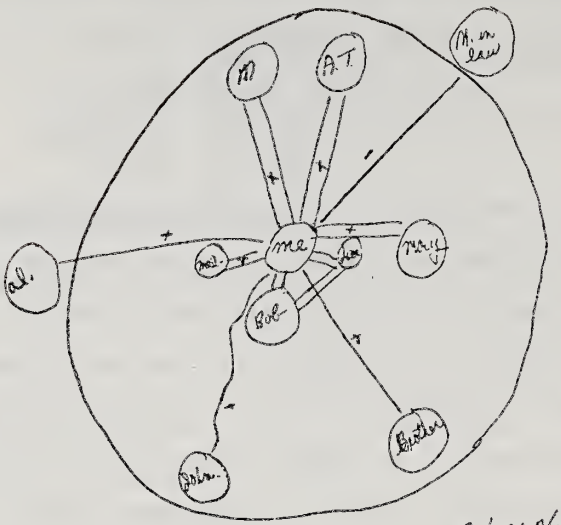
Mrs. D: Touch the house. On this page. (Points to the house.) The house.
Linda: (Points to the correct object.)
Mrs. D: Fine! This is the ball. See the ball here? (Points to the ball.) Where's the other ball?
Linda: (Points to the ball.)
Mrs. D: O.K. (Turns the page.) O.K., this is a cop. Where's the other cop?
Linda: (Reaches over and points to the cop.) Here!

The St. Anne Family.

As indicated in the Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 2), the St. Anne children were strongly connected with their mother, with each other, with their maternal grandmother and aunt, and, to a lesser extent, with their father. Mrs. St. Anne drew herself in the center of the life space and then proceeded to draw all family relationships directly to her. She stated: "That's right. I'm in the middle of it all." Reflecting on the role that her husband performed with the children, Mrs. St. Anne remarked: "I think he lets them get away with a little too much. I see them running him more than him running them. They do. They seem to do what they want. More than him influencing them."

Mr. St. Anne agreed with how his wife depicted his function in the family. He saw his role primarily as one of provider and disciplinarian. He made the following comments after reflecting on the family life space drawing. He stated: "Yeah, I guess so. A farther away influence. You

Fig. 2. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. St. Anne.



Mother in law (PATERNAL)
M- Mother (MATERNAL)
AT - Aunt theresa (PATERNAL)
AL - Girlfriend Alberta
Mel - Daughter Melissa
Jan - Son Jamie
mary - girlfriend
Bob
Johnny - stepfather
Brother

Figure 2

know, put them in line. Try to teach them the best way. But they (referring to his wife and mother-in-law) do a pretty good job."

The difference between the father-children and mother-children subsystems was most evident when, after being with their mother all day, Mr. St. Anne returned home from work. As witnessed through observations and verbal reports by Mrs. St. Anne, when Mr. St. Anne was home, the children tended to become more active and harder to manage.

Mrs. S: They seem to, they're more active when he's here. They argue more.
Eddy: We get in little fights.
Maria: Eddy beats me up and I beat him up.
Interviewer: What does your daddy do?
Maria: He slaps me.

Father-mother-child subsystem. Even when Mr. St. Anne was present, Mrs. St. Anne provided most of the direct caregiving behavior. As was typical for the St. Anne family, Mrs. St. Anne, whether the interaction took place at the level of interpersonal subsystems or at the level of the family unit subsystem, interaction between and among family members was mediated through Mrs. St. Anne. Mr. St. Anne, as shown in the proceeding episode, performed an ancillary, indirect caretaking role in the family.

Maria and Eddy have just completed the projects that their mother had constructed for them. Mr. St. Anne and Mrs. St. Anne remained seated on the couch watching television.

Maria: Yeah, we're goin' to have some donuts.
Mrs. S: No, you're not because I don't have any donuts.
Maria: Nanna does. How about Poptops? How about cookies and milk? You have cookies and coffee.
Mrs. S: No!

Eddy: (Sits by his father's out-stretched legs, looks up at his father.) Put your foot up. Put your foot up.
Mr. S: (Absorbed with the television program.)
Eddy: Hey, put your foot up!
Mr. S: (Without taking his eyes off of the television, raises his foot.)
Eddy: (Climbs up on his father's leg.) No lift it up. (Laughs.)
Mrs. S: (Looks over at Eddy who is now jumping up and down on his father's leg.) You're going to get into trouble for lifting it. (Directs her comments at her husband.) Eddy, you're loosening up that tube in there again. (Refers to the tube in the television.) Stop your jumping. The tube's loose again.
Mr. S: O.K., knock it off.

Grandparent-Child Subsystem

When the entire family became the focus of research, the father-child relationship was observed to be very important in shaping the development of the young child. As previously mentioned, child development researchers have invested most of their efforts investigating the mother-child relationship and, to a lesser degree, the father-child relationship. As more time was spent with each of the families, two additional interpersonal subsystems emerged as being instrumental in nurturing the young child's development: the grandparent-child and sibling subsystems.

The young child's relationship with grandparents and siblings have, with a few exceptions, been ignored by child development researchers. Although it appeared that the parent-child subsystem was the most predominant socializing relationship in the families studied, the children in the families were involved in meaningful and stimulating relationships with grandparents, sisters, and brothers.

The St. Anne Family.

Although most of Eddy St. Anne's time was spent operating within the domain of the mother-child subsystem, Eddy was also observed to be involved with his maternal grandmother, and, to a lesser extent, his maternal step-grandfather. Eddy had developed a fairly strong relationship with his grandparents. Since his grandparents lived on the second floor, Eddy was afforded ample opportunity to spend time with them.

Grandmother-child subsystem. The grandmother-child subsystem was exemplified during the showing of home movies. Throughout the movies, Mrs. St. Anne's mother was observed caring for Eddy and Maria. After watching her mother giving Eddy a bath, Mrs. St. Anne stated:

> My mother used to come up every single morning before work. My mother would spend a hour and a half with me. She never missed a day, never from the time Maria was born. She had to be at work at 11:00 a.m. She'd come over at 9:00 a.m. and stay 'til it was time to go.

Eddy's grandmother often watched Eddy and Maria when they played in the backyard. Many evenings she would have her grandchildren watch television with her and her husband. Her husband ran a small casting business in the cellar shop and often Eddy and Maria would visit with him and watched him work at his casting trade.

Grandparents-child subsystem. As was typical of grandparent-child subsystem relationships in the families studied, Eddy's grandparents allowed Eddy and Maria more freedom than did Mrs. St. Anne. Besides buying Eddy and Maria gifts and allowing them to stay up and watch television past their normal bedtime, the maternal grandparents provided their grandchildren with a second home. When the St. Anne children

felt somewhat hemmed in, they were free to retreat to the second floor refuge of their grandparents' tenement or to watch their step-grandfather as he worked at his casting trade in the cellar. Whatever the content of the experience, the grandparent-child subsystem afforded Eddy and Maria with a second interpersonal subsystem experience that was quite different from the relationship operating in the parent-child subsystem.

As noted, the mother-child relationship in the St. Anne family was the most central and influential relationship at the level of interpersonal subsystem functioning. The relationship that the St. Anne children were establishing with their maternal grandparents, especially their maternal grandmother, appeared to serve as a secondary caregiver relationship. This relationship directly complemented Eddy and Maria St. Anne's relationship with their mother and appeared more salient than the relationship they established with their father.

The Fisher Family.

When grandfather Fisher visited with his grandchildren, which was quite frequent, adult-child interaction underwent an immediate transformation. Grandfather Fisher enjoyed joking with his grandchildren and often became physically involved in their play. His presence seemed to create an aura of entertainment, allowing the Fisher children to act somewhat differently than the way they acted when with their parents. The impact that grandfather Fisher had on the Fisher family was witnessed during one family observation.

Grandfather-child subsystem. The Fishers had just sat down to their evening meal when the doorbell rang and Mr. Fisher's father walked into the kitchen. Mrs. Fisher immediately arranged another dinner

setting for grandfather Fisher between Kathy and her husband. After briefly asking about the part-time job that grandfather Fisher had applied for at the telephone company, both Mr. and Mrs. Fisher instructed Jimmy to "give granpy some skin."

Grandpa: Come on, hit it. (Holds out his hand for Jimmy to slap.)
Jimmy: (Slaps his grandfather's palm with his hand.)
Grandpa: O.K., give me some skin. Show granpy how you do it.
Carl: (Reaches over and is about to give his grandfather some skin.)
Jimmy: (Hesitates slapping his grandfather's hand.)
Mr. F: (Looks over at Carl.) Let him do it himself.
Mrs. F: (Maintains eye contact with Carl.)
Jimmy: (Reaches over and hits his grandfather's palm with his hand.)
Kathy: He's doing it!
Carl: He's doing it!

On another occasion, grandfather Fisher decided, when supper was over, to engage the family in solving riddles.

Grandpa: (Leans back in his chair.) A riddle, a riddle I suppose, one hundred eyes and never a nose.
Mr. F: Do you know what it is? (Turns to Kathy.) She loves riddles.
Grandpa: A riddle, a riddle I suppose, a hundred eyes and never a nose.
Carl: A monster with no nose.
Mr. F: Nope. (Looks over at his wife.) Mommy doesn't know either.
Mrs. F: I...
Mr. F: (Interrupts.) I know it. A potato is it.
Grandpa: (Shakes his head no.)
Mr. F: A potato has eyes.
Grandpa: But it doesn't have a hundred.

Later on in the evening, grandfather Fisher played with Carl and Kathy before they were to get ready for bed. He engaged them in a wrestling match on the living room floor, pitting Kathy and Carl against

him. As he left to go home, grandfather Fisher made sure to kiss Kathy and Carl good night and promised them that he would visit them over the weekend.

The DiMaggio Family.

The DiMaggio family was embedded in an extended family network of relationships, the primary one being the child rearing role performed by both the maternal grandfather and paternal grandparents.

In their Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 3), Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio drew the strongest, most influential lines from themselves and the parental grandparents to Michelle and Linda. They also connected their two daughters to each other with strong, influential ties. This inner family was, in turn, embedded within the larger extended family. The only other person Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio felt exerted a strong influence on the children, but not as strong as the paternal grandparents, was the maternal grandfather, Dominic.

Maternal grandfather-child subsystem. Dominic lived with the DiMaggios and, although Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio felt that he did not influence his granddaughters as much as he thought he did, Dominic nevertheless was observed to be engaged in a continuous, caregiving relationship with Michelle and Linda.

During the early years of their marriage, Dominic spent a great deal of time caring for Michelle. Now, most of his time was spent with Linda. However, one problem that had recently developed was Dominic's constant interference with parental child rearing methods. Dominic tended to allow Linda to do things that were contrary to parental

Fig. 3. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio.

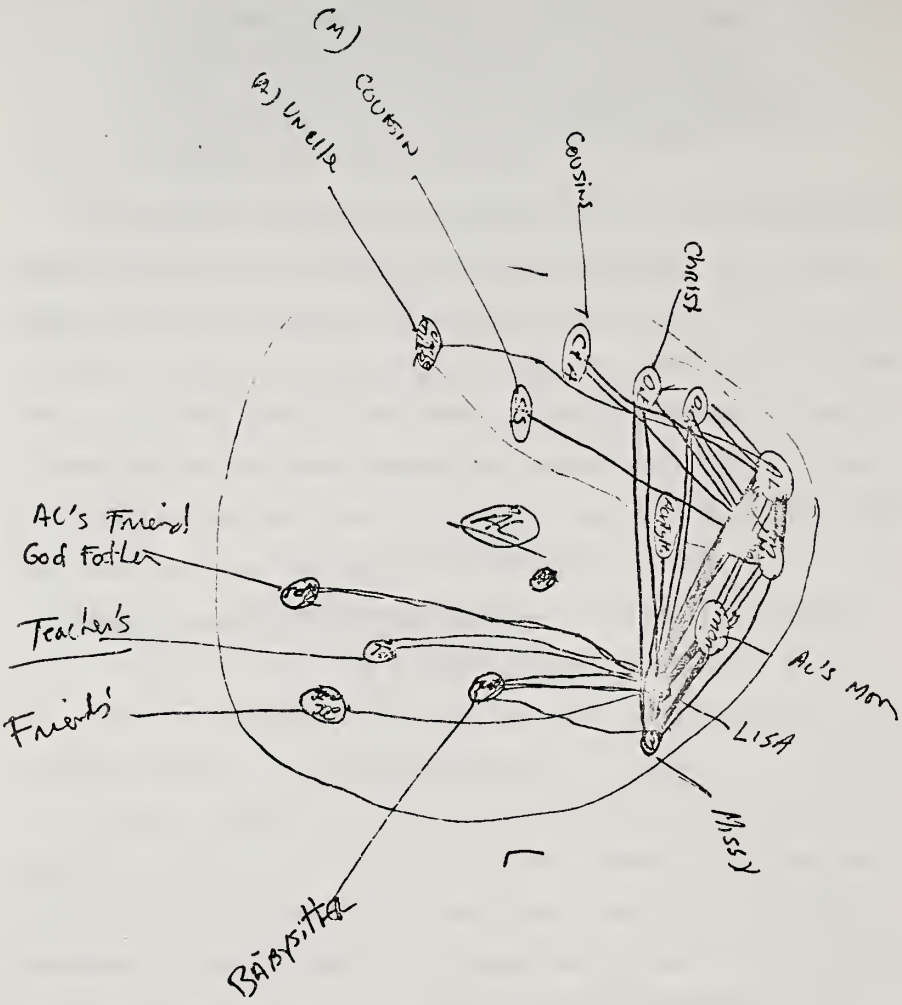

(M)
COUSIN
(F) UNELLA
COUSIN
CHRIST
AC's Friend
God Father
Teacher's
Friends'
AC's MOM
LISA
MISSY
BABYSITTER

Figure 3

wishes. Against the wishes of Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio, Dominic continued to buy Linda candy whenever he took her to the store. Mr. DiMaggio summed up his frustration with Dominic's behavior:

> It's Linda, Linda everything. He's the one that wants them to have the candy and stuff and then it costs me $130.00 for the dentist. I don't mind once in a while but he used to take them every day. Linda would go in that store; if she said she wanted three half gallons of milk and 5,000 cupcakes, she came back with all that stuff.

The paternal grandparents also had the habit of buying their granddaughters whatever they wanted when they went shopping. As a result, whenever Linda went shopping with her parents she would ask them to buy her a gift. When her parents refused to buy her a gift of candy or some other treat, Linda developed the habit of opening a package of cookies or some other kind of sweet without her parents' permission. Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio attributed the difficult time they have taking Linda shopping to the fact that her grandparents have spoiled Linda.

Paternal grandparents-child subsystem. The paternal grandparents lived close-by and both Linda and Michelle spent a great deal of time with them. Their grandparents babysat for them, had them over for dinner during the week, and took them shopping. If anything ever happened to Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio, the paternal grandparents would become legal guardians of Michelle and Linda. Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio indicated just how important the paternal grandparents were, especially the paternal grandmother, during the Family Life Space Drawing session. As she drew her in-laws into the family drawing, Mrs. DiMaggio commented: "This will be a big circle because your mother, you know your mother. She's with the kids; she influences them. A big circle." Mr. DiMaggio added:

"Give them a little shot and they say 'I'm going to tell Nanna'."

The importance of the grandparent-child subsystem was vividly seen during the last family observation. Mrs. and Mr. DiMaggio remarked how if one was to understand the people who influenced the lives of their daughters, then one would have to experience the extended family, especially the paternal grandparents. Every Sunday the extended family congregated at the home of the paternal grandparents.

On this particular Sunday afternoon, most of the interaction centered around the large dining room table. Linda and Michelle spent most of their time moving back and forth between their parents, a few cousins, and their grandparents. When they were not playing with their cousins in the parlor, they were observed talking either with their grandmother or sitting on their grandfather's lap as he told them a story or joked with them. On this particular afternoon, Linda spent more time with her grandfather while Michelle was observed interacting more with her grandmother.

Sibling Subsystem

The influence that siblings have on one another is a neglected area of research. The research literature on sibling relationships is, for all practical purposes, nonexistent. Very few researchers have directly observed sibling interaction inside families. It was apparent, however, that in the families studied, children were certainly spending a great deal of time with each other. In the complex network of family relations, children were often observed engaging in a variety of socially and educationally meaningful experiences with each other. After considerable

time was spent with each family, it became obvious that to ignore the part that children played in shaping one another's lives was to grossly overlook an important component of the family system-child relationship.

The DiMaggio Family.

Although Michelle DiMaggio was developing a peer network with the children in her first grade class, she nevertheless was observed spending a considerable amount of time with Linda when they were home. Since Michelle was older than Linda, her parents expected her to keep a watch on her younger sister whenever they were playing without adult supervision.

One time Michelle was reprimanded by her mother for not watching out for Linda. While giving Linda her evening bath, Mrs. DiMaggio noticed that Linda had some bruises on her back and on her legs. Upset with what she saw, Mrs. DiMaggio asked Michelle if she knew how Linda received these bruises. Michelle related how while over their cousin's house the other day, Linda had fallen off the bike they were riding. Mrs. DiMaggio, somewhat angry at Michelle, told her that she should not have allowed Linda to ride the two-wheel bike. The bike was too big and Linda could have been seriously hurt herself. Mrs. DiMaggio ended her conversation with Michelle with the statement: "You should know better than that."

Daughter-daughter subsystem. Mrs. DiMaggio related how when Michelle was Linda's age, she would read Michelle all kinds of books. Now, she found herself letting Michelle read to Linda. On one occasion, when a telephone call interrupted Mrs. DiMaggio's playing a concept recognition

game with Linda, Michelle took over her mother's facilitator role.

Michelle: O.K., you tell me the colors.
Linda: Umm. Blue. (Laughs.)
Michelle: Tell me. Red, where's the other red?
Linda: Umm. (Looks over the page.)
Michelle: It starts with D. Where is it?
Linda: E? (Looks again at the page.) A?
Michelle: Linda! Tell me what color.
Linda: Umm. Red. (Points to the color red.)
Michelle: Red. Where's the other red?

The Fisher Family.

As was typical of older children in the families studied, Kathy Fisher spent a lot of time with her two younger brothers. During the final observation, the videotaping of the Fisher family, Kathy's caregiver function was vividly depicted.

Daughter-brother subsystem. Throughout the final family observation Kathy constantly kept watch over Carl and Jimmy. She made sure that Jimmy did not wander off too far from the field of interaction and when it was time for Carl and Jimmy to present themselves via family photographs, Kathy introduced them for the videotaping. When it came time to interview Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, Kathy spontaneously took over the interview, asking her parents questions pertaining to what each child was like in the family. It was as if Kathy was acting as a spokesperson for the sibling subsystem. Her spokesperson role was manifested when her mother asked Kathy if she had any more questions to ask. Kathy replied: "No we don't." The use of the pronoun "we" along with her initiating and caregiving behavior strongly suggested Kathy's role in caring for her brothers. As Mrs. Fisher commented: "She's like a mother image is the way I always thought of it."

The St. Anne Family.

Although the sibling subsystem in the St. Anne family did not appear to be as influential as it was in the DiMaggio and Fisher families, Eddy St. Anne and his 6-year old sister spent a considerable amount of time playing with each other. As to what degree Eddy and Maria, or for that matter the Fisher and DiMaggio children, were influencing each other was uncertain from the data obtained. However, when Eddy and Maria were alone, Eddy was often observed to oppose his sister. Within the safe boundary of their interpersonal subsystem, Eddy and Maria appeared to experiment with a variety of behaviors that were not permitted when their mother was present.

Daughter-brother subsystem. The sibling subsystem relationship that had developed between Eddy and Maria was vividly captured in the home movies. In one episode Maria was filmed feeding and bathing Eddy. Upon seeing Maria feeding Eddy, Mrs. St. Anne remarked: "He wouldn't eat for me but she wanted to feed and I let her try. He opened his mouth. Look at him, look at the way she's holding that spoon. She's saying 'How's that mommy?' "

Throughout the reels of film, Eddy and Maria were always together. The same held true whenever an observation was conducted. Eddy and Maria, whether at home, in the backyard, or at school social function, were always together. One can only guess the effects that Eddy and Maria were having on one another.

Comments

As noted, the focus in this chapter was on the child's relationships

with family members at the level of interpersonal subsystems. However, the adults in the families studied were also observed to engage in and be influenced by a variety of interpersonal subsystem relationships, most noticeably the spouse subsystem and the grandparent-parent subsystem.

The parents in this study were all married for the first time. In two families, the St. Annes and the Williams, there was some evidence of marital disharmony. The remaining couples appeared to be experiencing a certain degree of marital satisfaction. A number of questions came to mind upon observing the spouse subsystem. Does the level of marital satisfaction affect the development of children and, if so, how? How does marital satisfaction affect adult development? What is the relationship between marital satisfaction, adult development, and the qualtiy of child care? What role does the child play in determining marital satisfaction? The affect that marital satisfaction has on the developing child and the affect that the developing child has on marital satisfaction need to be addressed by child development researchers.

The other important subsystem that adults were involved in was the grandparent-parent subsystem. The role that grandparents perform in caring for children and influencing family life of their children is a neglected area of research. In the families studied, a substantial number of parents were still trying to resolve their relationships with their own parents. For example, Mr. Williams, Mrs. Mason, Mrs. DiMaggio, Mr. L'Campion, Mr. Nazareth, Mr. Lancer and Mrs. Cabana were all trying to resolve critical differences that they were having with their parents. In certain instances the resolution of these differences appeared to have an indirect effect on family life. The relationship between the

grandparent subsystem and the marital subsystem, as well as the effects that grandparents have on children needed to be investigated by researchers.

The Child's Interpersonal Subsystem Relationships.

The research literature would lead one to believe that the young child lived in a matriocentric world. This would certainly be true for the young child who did not have any other family except for his mother. However, this was not the case in the families investigated. In the families studied, other family members besides mothers, namely, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, brothers, and sisters had formed meaningful relationships with the young child.

As was depicted in the DiMaggio, Fisher and St. Anne families, the young child functioned simultaneously in a variety of interdependent subsystems within the family system. In the families studied, the prevalent relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems that seemed to be shaping the life of the young child were the parent-child, grandparent-child, and sibling relationships. Each of these interpersonal subsystem relationships was equipped with its special array of experiences and characterized by a distinguishing psychosocial profile. Relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems also developed a particular shared meaning, the salience of which could only be understood within the geography of the particular subsystem.

Interpersonal subsystem relationships also varied in membership. Sometimes the young child was observed functioning within dyadic subsystems. Dyadic subsystem relationships were the most common type of interpersonal

subsystem and surely the easiest to study. At other times, though, subsystem relationships consisted of three or more family members, as, for example, when the child became involved with both parents, grandparents, or two siblings and a parent. It appeared, however, that most interpersonal subsystem relationships limited themselves to two and, to a lesser degree, three family members. Even when three or four family members were present in the same room, the interaction often would divide into dyads, with family members moving freely from one subsystem to another.

A particular sytle of interaction and range of experience occurred when, for example, the young child was with his mother, with his grandfather, or with his brother. Each of these dyadic relationships was characterized by a particular psychosocial profile, richness of experience, and shared meaning. When other family members with whom the child also had formed meaningful and intimate relationships entered the transactional space of the dyadic subsystem, a new interpersonal subsystem relationship was created. The resultant polyadic subsystem was also imbued with a distinguising psychosocial profile, range of experience, and shared meaning.

Take the case of the DiMaggio family. When Linda DiMaggio crossed the subsystem boundary and entered the psychosocial territory within which Michelle and Mr. DiMaggio were diligently trying to solve the directions to a weaving kit that Mr. DiMaggio had just purchased for Michelle, a new interpersonal subsystem relationship emerged. In this case, the dyadic subsystem characterizing Mr. DiMaggio and Michelle's relationship was transformed into a triadic, father-daughter-daughter subsystem relationship. This transformation occurred through the merger

of three different interpersonal subsystems: Mr. DiMaggio-Michelle, Mr. DiMaggio-Linda, and Linda-Michelle.

The interaction that was occurring between Michelle and her father took on a different style and somewhat different content when Linda entered their subsystem. Likewise, a new subsystem relationship came into being when Mrs. DiMaggio entered the room and participated in the interaction that was occurring between and among her husband and their two daughters. However, in this case, since all the DiMaggios were joined together in interaction, including Dominic who was watching from his easy chair, family member relationships were expressed at the level of the family unit subsystem. The young child's relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem will be discussed in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER VI

ESTABLISHING FAMILY UNIT SUBSYSTEM RELATIONSHIPS

In this dissertation family life has been compared to the filming of a movie. When the camera moved in for a close-up, the viewer, in this case the researcher, experienced the subtleties expressed in the interaction. In close-up shots, particular features of the action were emphasized. A more panoramic picture emerged when the camera systematically enlarged its focus, allowing the viewer to experience the intricacies contained in the action. The integration of close-ups and distance exposures enabled the viewer to vicariously experience the intimacy of actor interaction as it occurred within and drew meaning from surrounding contextual events. The wider milieu in which the close-ups were embedded imbued the action with a deeper sense of what was actually happening. Conversely, focusing in on the action had a reverberating effect on the more panoramic scenes, emotionally enriching the wider setting in which the close-ups were embedded.

Transactions at the level of interpersonal subsystems could be considered close-up pictures while family unit subsystem transactions could be viewed as the more panoramic scenes. In order to fully experience the young child's psychosocial functioning inside the family system, both types of pictures were needed. Understanding the young child's family world thus necessitated investigating not only the subtle interactions operating within the domains of interpersonal subsystem relationships but also expanding the research lens to encompass the child's relationship with family members at the level of the family unit subsystem.

Theoretical Background.

Although the young child can be studied establishing and maintaining a number of interpersonal subsystem relationships, the total impact of the family system on the developing child cannot be fully understood unless careful attention is concurrently directed to the family unit subsystem. According to family systems theory (Kantor & Lehr, 1975; Minuchin, 1974; Speer, 1970; Wertheim, 1975), any investigation of the family system that considers only interpersonal subsystem relationships most likely will present a distorted and superficial picture of those psychosocial variables that are impinging upon family members.

Kantor and Lehr (1975) emphasized the importance of looking at the entire family system for understanding family member development:

> Although it may seem a luxury to investigate operations within each of the subsystems and at their touching points, one can be seriously misled unless he does so or, at the very least, recognizes that he should. It is precisely because families tend to vary their style of organization from subsystem to subsystem that the formulation of conclusions about the whole based on the examination of a few parts can be hazardous. (p. 23)

As a "bounded universe", the family system develops systemic rules (Wertheim, 1975) and family themes (Hess & Handel, 1974) that imbue the family and family interaction with a sense of internal organization. This internal organization provides family members with a framework within which to assimilate and accommodate intra- and extrafamilial experiences. Commenting on how families develop transactional patterns that are generic to family functioning, Minuchin (1974) cited how each family develop a thematic structure that organizes family life:

> Family structure is the invisible set of functional demands that organizes the ways in which family members interact. A family is a system that operates through transactional patterns. Repeated transactions establish patterns of how, when, and to whom to relate, and these patterns underpin the system. (p. 51)

It is just this invisible thematic structure that distinguishes family unit subsystem interaction from interaction occurring at the level of interpersonal subsystems.

Interaction at the level of the family unit subsystem thus takes on a slightly different form and content and a different meaning than interaction at the level of interpersonal subsystems. Just as each interpersonal subsystem relationship develops its own distinguishing psycyosocial profile, relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem possess a characteristic thematic style that differentiates these relationships from relationships occurring at the level of interpersonal subsystems.

In this dissertation Hess and Handel's (1974) definition of family theme is used. They defined family theme as follows:

> A family theme is a pattern of feelings, motives, fantasies, and conventionalized understandings grouped about some locus of concern which has a particular form in the personalities of the individual members. The pattern comprises some fundamental view of reality and some way or ways for dealing with it. In the family themes are to be found the family's implicit direction, its notion of 'who we are' and 'what we do about it.' (p. 11)

In sum, the family unit subsystem, to call upon Jackson's (1965) conceptualization, is different from the sum of its parts. As such, the types of experiences and relationships that the young child comes into contact at the level of interpersonal subsystem operations are

qualitatively different than the experiences and relationships that the child is exposed to when the child experiences the family unit subsystem.

An Overview of Family Unit Subsystem Relationships.

In the families studied, children and adults were observed establishing both interpersonal subsystem and family unit subsystem relationships. As the study progressed, it became apparent that any investigation of the family system-child relationship that only considered interpersonal subsystem relationships would undoubtedly be incomplete without simultaneously focusing on relationships occurring at the level of the family unit subsystem.

When the young child interacted at the level of the family unit subsystem, as opposed to interacting with particular family members, the child appeared to engage in a qualitatively different experience. For example, 2-year old Lori Mason's family world changed drastically when, after being home all day with her mother and her 4-year old brother, her older sister and father arrived home. As Lori functioned within the boundaries of mother and sibling subsystems, it was possible to narrow the observational focus to include dyadic and triadic transactions. However, when the entire Mason family was together, which happened just about every evening and on the weekends, the observational focus had to be expanded to include not only specific interpersonal subsystem relationships but transactions that were occurring at the level of the family unit subsystem.

Family Themes.

Observing all the various interpersonal subsystems at interface was,

as exemplified in the Mason family, very confusing. At times it appeared almost impossible to even attempt to capture all the subtle interactions, gestures, and behaviors that were happening. Yet, every time an entire family was experienced, either through naturalistic observations and/or task oriented sessions, the researcher came away with a deeper sense of what family life was like for the young child. The problem that arose, however, was how to identify, translate, and interpret this sensation of what family life was like inside each of the families.

Capturing what it actually meant to a young child to be a member of a particular family could not be programmed on a computer or summarized by statistical computation. Nevertheless, how the young child perceived and felt about what was happening in her family appeared to be essential for understanding the young child's development. Whether or not parents employed elaborate or restricted language styles, although important for the young child's language acquisition, might not have been as important as the meaning contained in the words.

The methodology employed in this dissertation was not sophisticated enough to unveil the hidden meanings contained in the myriad of interactional episodes. What did emerge after listening to what seemed to be endless hours of tapes, was the realization that something different occurred when the family unit subsystem came together as opposed to when various interpersonal subsystems were observed. Relationships that involved the entire family unit subsystem were observed to take on a different style or personality than relationships that operated at the level of various interpersonal subsystems. Whereas interpersonal subsystems were characterized by particular interactional styles (psychosocial

profiles) and range of experience, relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem seemed to be organized around what could best be described as family themes.

Family themes were extremely difficult to identify and describe. At times these themes appeared to be elusive and somewhat invisible. Family themes nevertheless appeared to be somehow related to family organization and structure. In some families, these themes seemed to be related to and reflected in family images and subsystem psychosocial profiles. Unfortunately, the origins of family themes and the processes which related themes to images and interpersonal subsystem profiles could not be ascertained from the data secured.

Despite research limitations that prevented an in depth analysis of the origins and internal structure and function of family themes, it was possible to make several postulations concerning the function family themes played in the families studied. It became apparent that when themes were identified they functioned as behavioral frameworks for monitoring transactions at the level of the family unit subsystem. Themes also appeared to breathe meaning and purpose into family life. The previously mentioned sensation that was experienced whenever the researcher spent a substantial amount of time with a family was best described and understood in terms of the themes that pervaded the family.

There seemed to be no restrictions to the number and variety of themes existing in any one family at a particular time in the family's development. Some families were observed to have two or three primary themes. Most likely, there was an hierarchically arranged network of themes in each family, some being more important and more pervasive than

others, while some themes served ancillary functions. In some families, themes were more easy to identify than in other families. Accordingly, it was quite possible, since themes were generally difficult to identify, for certain central themes to go unobserved.

Three families have been randomly selected for purposes of illustrating how family themes helped to monitor relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem. Episodes from the Builder family, the Lancer family, and the Waverly family were selected in order to depict how family themes helped to mediate the family system-child relationship.

Identification of Themes

Belonging to a family and the shared experience that such membership inspired in adults and in children, was reflected in the themes that emerged in each of the 12 families. In order to understand Floyd Builder, Jamie Lancer, and Jennifer Waverly, or for that matter any of the children and adults in the families studied, it was helpful to gain some appreciation of what it meant to each child to live inside his respective family. What appeared to distinguish and characterize one family unit subsystem from another could best be procured through the identification of family themes. The structure and organization of the young child's family world was observed to be a function, at least in part, of particular family themes.

The Builder Family.

The major theme contained in the Builder family unit subsystem was the Builders' passionate quest to experience intellectual and emotional diversity. Mr. and Mrs. Builder valued their family's ability to respond

to their sons' innate potentials and thus structured experiences that would best nurture these potentials.

Mrs. Builder compared her sons' development to that of a sponge, soaking up all the knowledge that they could. As she commented during one interview, "It's like a sponge somewhat. The more you put into it, the more it can hold."

Mr. Builder agreed with his wife. He remarked how he had witnessed Floyd's soaking up of experiences in the family. He related how when he had been a boy he had had this "insatiable desire to do things." He had wanted the right tools and materials to build things. Although his father had purchased him tools and materials, his use of these materials had been somewhat restricted. When his father would lock the toolbox, Mr. Builder would break it open. With his own two sons though, Mr. Builder gave them free reign with the tools that were lying around the house even though some of the tools might be considered dangerous for a child to use without adult supervision. As Mr. Builder commented, "Floyd may electrocute himself but I don't want to restrict him."

Mr. Builder, in keeping with the theme of soaking up experiences, felt that his two sons' open experimentation with the home environment would greatly influence their development. He stated:

> The intellectual development here in this family is going to be broader than in my family in terms of overall exposure. A lot of different things, like cooking, art, music. Like trips, museums, zoos, things like that. Even though all my sisters and brothers have college degrees, I think for well roundedness, I think this will be broader.

The Waverly Family.

In the Waverly family, a primary theme that pervaded relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem was the theme of respect for the family and equal treatment, according to age and sex, of all family members. Being a Waverly entailed showing respect for family members, not only parents but for members of the wider extended family. Family meant everything to the Waverlys. If judged by contemporary standards, the Waverly family could be classified as a traditional nuclear family. In the Waverly family, family roles were organized around sex and age variables. Family members were expected to develop certain biosocial behaviors according to whether one was a child or an adult, a female or a male.

For Jennifer Waverly and the rest of the Waverly children, belonging to the family unit subsystem entailed membership in the extended family as well. The Waverly Family Life Space Drawing was a complicated network of family relations (Figure 4). Relatives were also observed stopping in for unannounced visits. The Waverly children would take turns spending weekends not only with their maternal grandparents but with aunts, uncles, and even older cousins. Of all the children in the families studied, the Waverly children were observed to spend the most time with their extended family.

Mr. and Mrs. Waverly considered the extended family to be a source of comfort and strength. When Mrs. Waverly was in the hospital the preceding year, her hospital room was constantly filled with relatives. Once home, relatives were constantly visiting and telephoning Mrs. Waverly. One relative in New York called every day for two weeks and another, upon

Fig. 4. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Waverly.

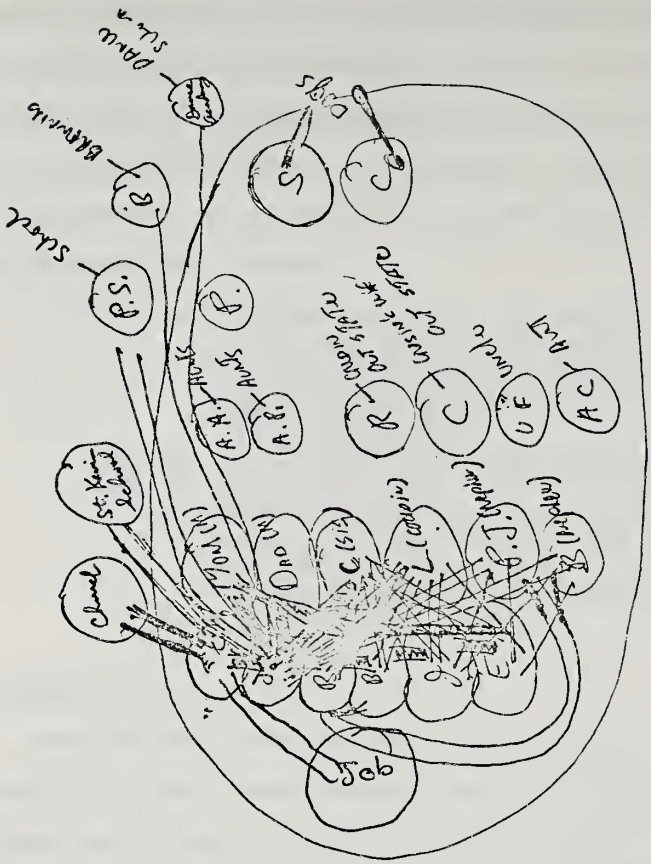


Figure 4

hearing of Mrs. Waverly's operation, called from Las Vegas to see how she was recuperating.

In addition to visiting often with one another and maintaining constant telephone contact, extended family members shared birthdays, anniversaries, and religious holidays. These family gatherings ritualistically provided the Waverly family with a time to be together and to share the consensual experience of belonging to a family. While constructing their Life Space Drawing, Mr. and Mrs. Waverly commented upon their extended family network.

> Mrs. W: It's been like this for 15 years. I say it's gotten stronger. When we were first married, we probably went out more and didn't see them as often, not that it wasn't strong. We were just more involved in outside activities.
> Mr. W: Life without them would be kind of dull.
> Mrs. W: They're part of all our lives. Mine, his, and the children. Like even my grandmother. You know, he was as close to her as I. In fact, she loved him. I wouldn't say more than me, like blood-sense, but as a person, him.

The Lancer Family.

Jamie and Tommy Lancer were members of a family unit subsystem that reflected a rational-logical approach towards family living. This rational-logical theme of family living was observed in Mr. and Mrs. Lancer's reportedly egalitarian philosophy of child rearing and their development of open communication in their marriage.

Although Mr. Lancer predominantly performed the traditional "breadwinner-provider" role in his family and Mrs. Lancer performed the "caring-mothering" role, they perceived this division of labor as the

most logical and efficient way to maintain a family with young children. In their effort to maintain an egalitarian family atmosphere, Mr. and Mrs. Lancer did all that they could to assist one another with their respective responsibilities. Mr. Lancer was observed to take an active role in caring for his two sons.

The Lancers worked diligently at maintaining a democratic family life style, both in their marriage and in their approach to child rearing. Underlying this egalitarian theme towards family life, was the theme to be as logical as possible in their resolution of family issues. This family theme was vividly depicted in Mr. Lancer's remarks concerning a conflict he and his wife had with his parents. Concerning the dispute with his parents, Mr. Lancer stated:

> And we'd finally had it. We sent a letter back to them and we just said 'We're equal partners in marriage and if you have any complaints about Pauline, just tell me. Tell us to our face, otherwise, don't bother us!' It's a very negative influence on our relationship. Our response wasn't out of anger. Our response was a very measured and logical response, pointing out to them that we're bound to have differences.

It seemed that this emphasis upon logically dealing with the world was interrelated with the Lancers' view of the unknown and which uncovered the theme of emphasis upon spiritual development. Mr. and Mrs. Lancer were deeply religious and were actively involved in their spiritual development as individuals, as a couple, and as a family. They belonged to a somewhat progressive sect of the Roman Catholic faith. Their involvement in the church had motivated them to participate in church sponsored marriage encounters. Mr. and Mrs. Lancer attributed, in part, their family's open communication style to their participation

in marriage encounter groups.

Theme as a Monitoring Mechanism

One way families ensured the maintenance and continuation of the family system was to monitor the enactment of family themes. The development of monitoring strategies many times appeared to reflect the themes that families had developed. Accordingly, the selection of television shows, friends, and the types of extrafamilial experiences to which the young child was exposed were, to some degree, affected by family monitoring strategies.

These monitoring or gatekeeping strategies allowed each family to establish social and physical boundaries for differentiating intra- and extrafamilial experiences. Besides determining what kinds of experiences were beneficial for children, monitoring strategies, as a function of family themes, provided parents with reference structures (behavioral guidelines) for interpreting intra- and extrafamilial experiences.

The Builder Family.

In keeping with their family's passionate quest for stimulation and diversity, Mr. and Mrs. Builder tightly monitored Floyd and William's selection of television shows, playmates, educational activities, and even the types of adults who were allowed access to the Builders' "inner family circle." Floyd and William were thus encouraged to view television shows on the educational network and were discouraged from watching too much commercial television, especially television shows which depicted violent and aggressive behaviors.

Monitoring television. After a family observation, Mr. and Mrs. Builder engaged in the following conversation regarding television viewing.

Mrs. B: The television shows. They don't get to watch any of the Six Million Dollar Man and all that stuff.
Mr. B: Wild Kingdom...
Mrs. B: (Interrupts.) Wild Kingdom, nature shows, NOVA on Channel Two.
Mr. B: Sesame Street, Electric Company.
Mrs. B: Then there's the ones you wished they didn't watch but you're not going to make a big thing of it. Like Saturday morning cartoons.

Monitoring playmates. Having Floyd and William play with who they considered proper types of children was very important to both Mr. and Mrs. Builder. In order to provide their children with what they considered the right kinds of experiences to assist in their sons' development, Mr. and Mrs. Builder tried, without being too obvious, to encourage Floyd and William to play with certain children in the neighborhood. This monitoring strategy was witnessed in one of the family interviews.

Mrs. B: I'm hesitant about friends. Because I don't want to step in. (Pause.) There's one child in the neighborhood who's two years older than Floyd is. This kid's not a bad kid but he has somewhat negative qualities. He's, I don't know, undesirable to me. Some undesirable qualities, not very abstract things. Just the way he talks. Now because this kid lives very close and there's no one Floyd's age to play with, I let them play together. And I try to control it. I don't ever want to step in and say 'I don't want you to play with so and so.' I don't want him to know. I don't want to deal with it that way. So I try to handle it saying things like 'You have to take a rest. When you come from school, staying up later at night, you have to take a rest.' Or, 'I'll take you to see so and so today.' Removing him from the kid's influence.
Mr. B: You have the other kids over purposefully.

Mrs. B: Purposefully that I have to go out of my way to have over. And I don't do it as much as I should.

Monitoring adult friends. Mr. and Mrs. Builder employed a similar gatekeeping strategy in their selection of the kinds of adults that they allowed inside their family. As indicated in their Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 5), the types of people that were allowed inside what Mr. Builder termed "the inner clique" were consistent with their desire to provide their family with as much intellectual and social diversity as possible.

Mrs. Builder remarked that "It all depends upon interest. Whether or not they understand our life style, things that we want." Accordingly, the Builder's placed a great deal of emphasis on being able to engage in "philosophical discussions" with the people who were members of their "inner family clique." This was why some of Mrs. Builder's family were kept at a distance. They did not have college backgrounds like her husband's immediate family and their values reflected the working-class. The only person who did not fit this criterion but who was allowed into the Builder's life space was Mrs. Builder's sister. Mrs. Builder's sister and her family, because of their emotional expressiveness and the fact that her sister was considered a second mother by Mrs. Builder, were allowed entrance in this "inner family clique."

Mr. Builder's brother and his wife were the kind of people that had the best chance of gaining access to this inner family life space. The paternal uncle and his wife possessed the kinds of qualities that were congruent with the family theme. They were the kind of people that would be good for their children "to soak up." Mrs. Builder described

Fig. 5. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Builder.

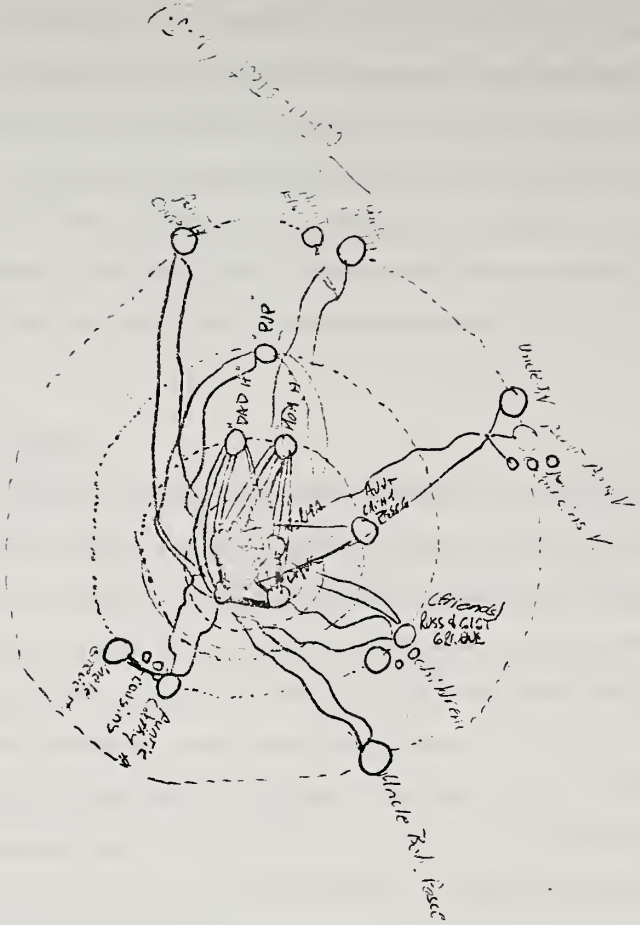


Figure 5

the paternal uncle and aunt as follows: "He's the kind of guy who tends toward the intellect. So, therefore, he's open to read things. And, Eleanor, fortunately, has two masters degrees but at the same time has a lot of depth." Accordingly, exposing Floyd and William to the emotional and intellectual diversity embodied in both the maternal aunt's family and in the paternal uncle's family was consistent with their family theme of providing their children with as much diversity as possible so that they could be like sponges and soak up all of this stimulation.

The Lancer Family.

The mechanism whereby intra- and extrafamilial experiences were assimilated and accommodated by family members appeared to have had its origins in the Lancers' equalitarian and rational-logical family theme. Although Mr. and Mrs. Lancer were not so intent upon monitoring television shows as Mr. and Mrs. Builder were, they did select the kinds of people with whom they shared their family life.

Monitoring the family life space. Whether or not a person was allowed to experience the Lancers' inner family life space depended primarily upon whether or not the individual accepted this egalitarian view of family living. Since Mr. Lancer's parents did not accept Mr. and Mrs. Lancer's concept of egalitarian marriage, they were not included in the Lancers' inner family life space. On the other hand, Mrs. Lancer's parents, since they accepted this egalitarian marriage style, were considered to be an important part of this inner family world. Mr. Lancer remarked that the reason why he got along so well with his in-laws was

because they had accepted him and his wife as equal partners in marriage.

Membership in the Lancer family was also dependent upon accepting Jamie and Tommy. Mrs. Lancer's younger sister was planning to be married. After having initial doubts about the prospective groom, Mr. and Mrs. Lancer finally accepted and developed a fairly decent relationship with the prospective groom. Mr. Lancer summed up one of the primary reasons that he and his wife had accepted this new family member. He stated: "I just didn't know how to take him but since he started warming up to the kids and stuff, I figured he wasn't all bad."

Waverly Family.

Mr. and Mrs. Waverly encouraged their children to spend as much time as possible experiencing their family. In keeping with the theme of importance of and respect for family, the Waverly children were observed to spend most of their time, except when they attended school, engaged in family-related activities. Family-centered experiences often appeared to consume the lives of R.J., Jennifer, Liza, and Roberta Waverly. Everything the Waverly children did in some way seemed to be centered around family life.

Monitoring children's play. Mrs. and Mr. Waverly both felt that it was important for their children, regardless of their age, to spend as much time as possible playing in or near their home. When 9-year old Roberta was to attend a pajama party at a friend's house, Mrs. Waverly advised her daughter that if things got out of hand to go over to her aunt's who lived two houses over from where Roberta was to spend the evening. To quote Mrs. Waverly: "I told her, if you're going to sleep

outside, tell them you're allergic to bugs and go over to your aunt's house."

Mr. Waverly, although he admitted that he and his wife tended to be somewhat overprotective of their children, nevertheless felt it was important for the family to experience things as a family. Why purchase a house with a big backyard if the children were allowed to play in the street, Mr. Waverly reasoned. As he stated, "I don't allow the older two girls to ride bikes in the neighborhood. That's why we bought a house with a big backyard." Mr. Waverly not only fenced-in the backyard, but he also constructed an in-ground swimming pool.

In order to provide her children with the kind of supervision she felt necessary, all of Mrs. Waverly's free time was spent with her children. Concerning her involvement with her children, Mrs. Waverly remarked:

> People say 'You've got a pool, how come you don't jump in at 9 o'clock?' I never go in until about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. And they say, 'How come?' Because how can you? You know? With the kids! First, it's breakfast, then you have to clean up, then you have to clean the house, then its lunch, then R.J. has to take a nap.

Mrs. and Mr. Waverly were also involved in all of their children's school and church related activities. They made it a point to attend church together every Sunday and to become involved with their children's swimming and dancing lessons. Whatever one family member became involved in, she was sure to be accompanied by at least two or three other family members.

Theme as a Behavioral Framework

In addition to being reflected in family monitoring strategies, family themes also were observed to serve as behavior guides for facilitating family system-child interaction. As such, family themes imbued family system-child interaction with a sense of what it meant to belong to a particular family. What appeared to distinguish one family system-child relationship from another family system-child relationship (e.g., Lancer family life from Builder family life), was the prevailing theme that permeated the very fabric of family transactions. It was just this prevailing theme, or themes, that structured the sensation that was felt by the researcher each time he experienced the entire family.

The extent to which family themes influenced and were influenced by interpersonal subsystem profiles was unclear. It was not possible, based upon the data collected, to formulate any definitive statements concerning the interrelationship among family themes, psychosocial profiles, and family member images. However, these variables did seem to be somehow interdependent, each appearing to affect the other. The observations that follow tend to lend some credence to the assumption that family themes acted as behavioral guides, helping to structure the style and content of interaction at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem.

The Lancer Family.

The Lancers' theme, identified as logically and rationally approaching family life, periodically surfaced during naturalistic observations. This underlying theme appeared, for example, to structure the dialogue

at the dinner table one evening.

Theme reflected in parent-child interaction. The Lancers had just sat down at the table located in the formal dining room. The ensuing dialogue took place while they ate their meal.

Mr. L: (Directs his conversation towards his wife.) I don't think he likes the quiche.
Mrs. L: I noticed. (Looks over at Jamie.)
Jamie: I don't like the quiche.
Mr. L: That's what you didn't like.
Tommy: (Starts to cry.)
Mrs. L: Maybe, I don't know. (Looks at Tommy and then looks at Jamie.) Jamie, sit up straight.
Mr. L: Do you think he wants a piece of this? (Glances over at his wife.)
Jamie: My tummy aches.
Mr. L: From what?
Jamie: I'm full. (Pause.) Food.
Mr. L: From your food?
Jamie: Yeah.
Mr. L: I think you're faking, Jamie.
Jamie: (Voice become lower.) No!
Mrs. L: I guess you don't need any dessert then.
Mr. L: No dessert for Jamie.
Jamie: (Mumbles to himself.)
Mr. L: Maybe some what? (Looks over at his wife.)
Jamie: Maybe another day.
Mrs. L: Another day? You don't want any dessert?
Jamie: No. Maybe another day.
Mrs. L: All right.
Mr. L: When's another day?
Jamie: Another day I'm done, play with my friends.
Mr. L: Can you play with your friends?
Mrs. L: Did you have a friend over today? Did you tell daddy about your friend today?
Jamie: (Gets up from his chair.)
Mr. L: Jamie, are you through eating?
Jamie: Yes, me and Tommy.
Mrs. L: Did you ask to leave the table?
Jamie: (Stands up beside his chair.) Yeah.
Mr. L: Jamie! (Looks directly at Jamie.)
Mrs. L: Ask to leave the table.
Jamie: How do I leave the table?
Mr. L: No, that's not how you ask to leave the table.
Jamie: (Sits down.) After I eat, can I leave the table.
Mr. L: Yes.

As reflected in the preceding conversation at the dinner table, Mr. and Mrs. Lancer's interaction with Jamie appeared to manifest a certain degree of being controlled and measured. Interaction at the level of the family unit subsystem was, in part, observed to be a function of the theme of being logical and rational. Approaching life in a logical and rational manner also was observed in the manner in which Mr. and Mrs. Lancer made decisions concerning education for their sons, purchased household items (e.g., food), and resolved family conflicts (e.g., how to deal with Mr. Lancer's parents).

The Builder Family.

A good time to experience Floyd and William Builder "soaking up" all the different kinds of experiences that constructing a house offered young children was on a Saturday morning. Saturday was a day that the Builders accomplished much of the week's work on the house. The following episode vividly depicted the enactment of the family theme of providing Floyd and William with as much intellectual and emotional diversity and stimulation as possible.

It was 8:30 a.m. Following breakfast, William and Floyd went upstairs to their bedroom, taking with them some scraps of wood and some tools. Mr. and Mrs. Builder remained seated at the breakfast table, having a second cup of coffee while they discussed what projects they were planning to work on this morning. The house was full of all sorts of woodworking materials. These materials were stored in the cellar and in the two rooms which were still under construction. The rest of the house was kept as neat as could be expected for a house still in the

process of being built. The children's bedroom reflected the general condition of the house. It was clean and orderly and contained a wide variety of building materials and tools.

Once they got settled in their room, Floyd and William immediately constructed a bridge out of scrapwood and then proceeded to play with some trucks and cars. At one point in their play, Floyd ran downstairs and came back with a piece of wood which he immediately used to expand the bridge.

Floyd and William played cooperatively in their room for approximately 20 minutes, after which time they came downstairs. William turned on the television and Floyd followed his father into the room that Mr. Builder was going to work on. While Mrs. Builder was busy cleaning in the kitchen and as William watched television, Floyd and his father worked busily in the room that would soon become the parlor.

Floyd sat on the floor and began nailing pieces of wood together. Mr. Builder began sawing a piece of wood that, when finished, would be the parlor door. Mrs. Builder decided to check in on what her son and husband were doing. While Mr. Builder described to his wife the procedures he was using to hang the door, Floyd continued working on his project. After Mrs. Builder left to resume her cleaning, Mr. Builder returned to his work.

Shortly after, Floyd decided to paint the airplane that he had just made. He went down into the cellar and came up with a pail and a paint brush. He went into the kitchen and asked his mother to wash the pail out and then returned to the parlor and asked his father for some green paint. Mr. Builder asked Floyd to hold down the piece of wood that he

was sawing. Floyd dropped his pail to the floor and, using all his strength, held down the piece of wood with both hands. As Mr. Builder sawed the wood, Floyd's right leg simultaneously moved in rhythm with the strokes of the saw.

Once Mr. Builder finished sawing, he gave Floyd some green paint. Floyd poured some of the paint into his pail, placed some newspapers on the floor just outside the room where Mr. Builder continued to work, and proceeded to paint his airplane green.

In the above episode, the family theme of "soaking up all the different kinds of experiences as possible" can be readily seen. Floyd was afforded the opportunity to engage in a variety of intellectually as well as emotionally enriching experiences with his mother, his brother, and especially with his father. Floyd's behavior and relationship with family members at the level of the family unit subsystem, as observed in the preceding episode, appeared to be mediated by the previously identified family theme.

The Waverly Family.

As with each of the families investigated, a number of themes seemed to be operating. In the Waverly family, one central family theme was the emphasis upon respect for family and equal treatment of family members. In the Waverly family, family members were observed to display a strong sense of "togetherness." This feeling of "togetherness" was strongest when the entire family was present.

This emphasis upon family was also observed in relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems. For example, in the episode to follow,

Jennifer's play centered around holding an imaginary conversation with her grandparents on the telephone.

Jennifer: (Sits on the floor of the cellar family room. Picks up the toy telephone and dials.) Where's Pepa? Where's Mema?
R.J.: (Rolls a ball over to Jennifer.)
Jennifer: (Throws the ball back to R.J. and continues her conversation.) Oh, hi. Can I speak to Pepa?
R.J.: (Rolls the ball again over to Jennifer.)
Jennifer: (Ignores the ball.) Janet, so you have the book yet? Oh, hi Pepa! Yes, hi Pepa! Can you bring me some candy? I thought you had some candy. Yeah, but Berta, Liz took theirs to school and we're going to eat them for lunch. (Hangs up the telephone and then immediately picks it up and dials her cousin Judy's number and proceeds to talk with her.)

A sense of equity. This emphasis upon "family togetherness" meant that the Waverly children spent an inordinate amount of time with one another. Mr. and Mrs. Waverly were somewhat aware that their children spent too much time playing with one another and that they needed, especially the two oldest daughters, to experience themselves as individuals as well as to experience themselves as members of a family. One way in which they attempted to nurture each child's selfhood was to make sure that each of their children received equal treatment. The theme of equity, a second primary family theme, was essential for the successful enactment of the theme of "family togetherness."

This sense of equity extended to television shows, material possessions such as clothes and toys, and the distribution of time spent with each child. For example, each of the Waverly children got a chance to pick a cereal she liked and a television show she preferred to watch. Each child had a set of Mickey Mouse ears and a shirt with his name

printed on the back. Each of the Waverly children was also enrolled in an outside activity, such as dance or swimming class. This approach of "giving to all what is given to one" was summed up by Mr. Waverly. He stated:

> One wants to watch one thing; one wants to watch another. I give them each a different day to watch what they want to watch. The oldest wants to watch the Newlyweds. The younger ones want to watch Sesame Street. They usually end up watching the same thing anyways.

Equity in the father-children subsystem. The following episode between Mr. Waverly and his three daughters depicts the enactment of the theme of equity. In this scene, Mr. Waverly had just arrived home from work. While his wife and her long-time friend prepared the evening meal, Mr. Waverly got a can of beer out of the refrigerator and went out to the backyard to supervise his daughters' play. He greeted each child with a kiss. Each child, in order of age and starting with the eldest, then performed a gymnastic trick for their father. From his seat on the swing, Mr. Waverly then proceeded to question each of his daughters on how her day went in school, making sure to include each one in his questioning.

Later on, Mr. Waverly initiated a game of frisbie. He arranged his daughters in a semicircle and then proceeded to throw the frisbie to each one, having each daughter throw it back to him. As each child took her turn catching and throwing the frisbie, Mr. Waverly instructed his daughters on how to properly catch and throw a frisbie, making sure to praise each daughter for her efforts.

As briefly illustrated in the above episode, Mr. Waverly consciously attempted to treat Roberta, Liza, and Jennifer equally, trying not to

favor one over the other. On numerous other occasions, Mr. and Mrs. Waverly were observed trying to equalize both the amount and psychological quality of time spent with each of their four children.

Theme as Meaning

A final and brief note must be made of the apparent function that family life played in providing family members with a sense of meaning and purpose. In some families this sense of meaning appeared to be contained in the themes expressed at the level of family unit subsystem relationships. The degree to which family themes imbued meaning and direction into family life could, based upon the data procured be only speculative at this time. However, as previously stated, the meaning and subtle messages behind the words and actions were probably the most important aspects of the young child's life inside the family but, unfortunately, the most difficult to identify.

The Lancer Family.

As already mentioned, Mr. and Mrs. Lancer strongly felt that sharing responsibilities and maintaining open communication and developing their spiritual awareness were essential ingredients for healthy family living. Egalitarian child rearing and open communication coupled with an emphasis upon approaching family life in a logical and rational fashion were the threads that gave meaning and direction to family life. During the Family Life Space Drawing session (Figure 6), Mr. Lancer expressed what family life meant to him. He stated:

> To me, the family is me. And if I was to separate myself from the family, I think I'd really disorient myself, do a lot of reactionary, immature types of

Fig. 6. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Lancer.

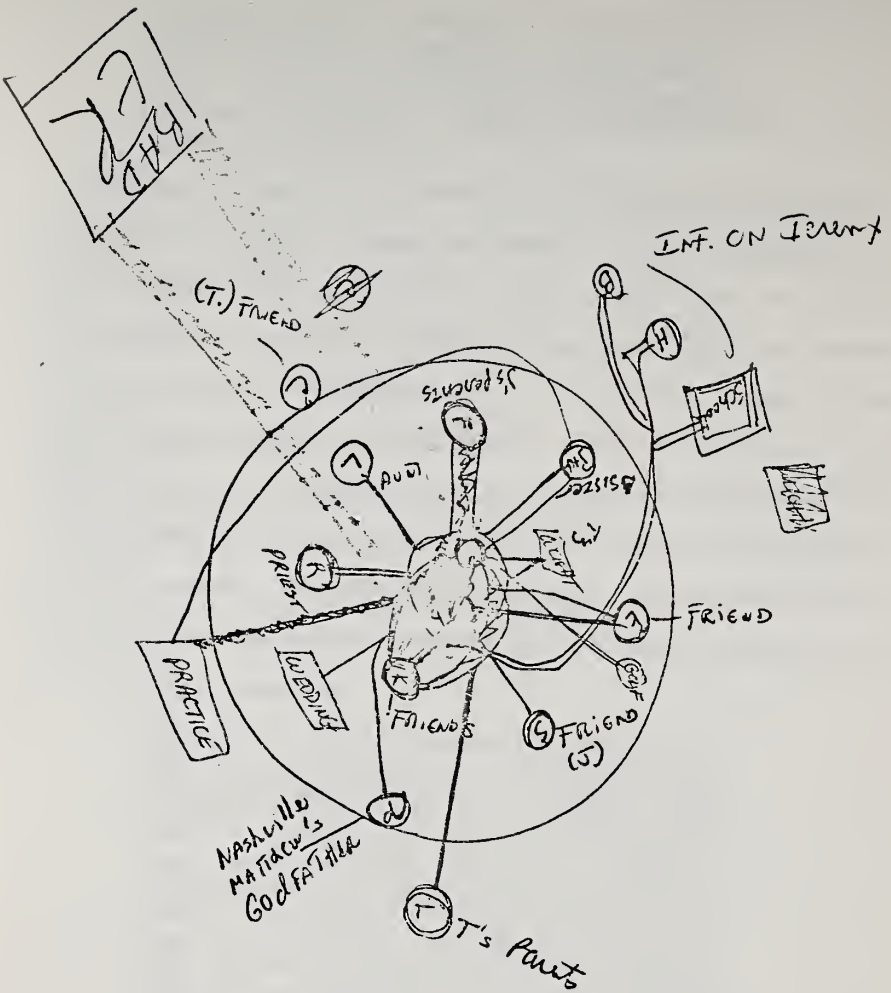

INT. ON Journey
(T.) FRIEND
J's parents
AUD
PRIEST
FRIEND
PRACTICE
WEDDING
FRIENDS
FRIEND (J)
GOLF
Nashville
MATTHEW is
Godfather
T's Parents

Figure 6

> things that weren't really me. I'm at ease and I'm comfortable in the family and they're extensions of myself as well as I'm an extension of Judy. Now, as the years pass, we're closer and closer. And the kids. Now we see them as extensions of ourselves.

The sense of meaning and purpose which Mr. Lancer described was also related to images of "Iness" and Weness": being connected as a family and being apart as individuals. This sense of open, egalitarian living seemed to allow family members to experience "Iness" and "Weness." This sense of caring interdependence also provided Mrs. Lancer with the emotional support needed to be the primary caregiver of her two young children, especially on days when caring for two young children appeared to be overwhelming. Mr. and Mrs. Lancer, as witnessed in observations and in the following comment made by Mr. Lancer, valued their ability to mutually support one another when they had experienced a long and tiring day. Mr. Lancer commented:

> When you had a miserable day and you're not as likely to tolerate as much from the kids and you might snap at them and not respond to them as affectionately. (Pause.) A couple of times when I caught myself. (Pause.) I come home and I'm not very happy; I'm angry. Jamie will do something and I don't even look at him and I scold him and then I'll look at him and he'll look at me and he has a smile on his face and all this stuff and I say to myself, 'Oh, God! What are you doing?' (Pause.) I think we communicate. We could have put marriage encounter there as an influence but I think we were communicating well before marriage encounter. I think early on we've talked and communicated and understanding developed between us.

And, finally, the sense of shared meaning that Mr. Lancer talked about and which was prevalent in different forms, in all of the families studied, was expressed by Mrs. and Mr. Waverly as they commented on

their Family Life Space Drawing.

Mr. W: I look forward to coming home. Hmm, I miss them when I'm at work. For seven years it was quiet. We had each other. Still, just to have one of them run up and kiss you when you come home from work. They line up.

Mrs. W: Like I'll say. I want them to get to bed. I want a few hours of peace or something. But not a whole day.

Mr. W: I come home because of my family; that's why I come home. They're waiting for me to come home. I feel good about it.

Comments

When the research focus widened its scope and looked beyond the level of interpersonal subsystem functioning, a different psychosocial family system-child transactional space was uncovered: the family unit subsystem. By employing an ecological research approach, it was possible to identify that component of the young child's family environment which, in this dissertation, is termed the family unit subsystem.

While it was beyond the scope of this study to present an in depth analysis of the structure and function of family unit subsystem relationships, the identification of this particular task and the rudimentary descriptions of how family themes influenced family system-child relationships could hopefully be gleaned from the data presented.

The psychosocial organization and meaning of family life, as observed in the Builder, Lancer, and Waverly families, appeared to be somewhat different than what was experienced when only interpersonal subsystem relationships were observed. Here, the basic principle of the non-summativity of parts was vividly enacted: The whole is different from

the sum of its parts. In this case the whole refers to the family unit subsystem and parts refers to interpersonal subsystems.

Family unit subsystem functioning seemed to be governed by what was identified as family themes. As illustrated in the three families presented, family themes acted as behavioral frameworks or reference structures around which relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem revolved. Family themes thus helped to organize the family system-child relationship, imbuing this relationship with a sense of meaning and direction. Themes, in the form of reference structures or behavioral frameworks, also functioned as a monitoring or gatekeeping mechanism, signaling to family members what extrafamilial experiences should be allowed to enter through family boundaries and, once inside, how these experiences should be interpreted.

There also appeared to exist a mutually accommodating relationship between the development and functioning of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. On one level, interpersonal subsystem relationships were viewed as being subsumed under the wider social boundary of the family unit subsystem. In certain instances, interpersonal subsystem relationships reflected various aspects of family themes. Accordingly, subsystem psychosocial profiles characteristic of particular subsystems appeared, to various degrees, to be a function of family themes.

When viewed from a different perspective, however, family themes seemed to have their origins in the emergence and subsequent synthesis of interpersonal subsystem profiles. And, to complicate matters even more, the development and maintenance of "Iness" and "Weness" via the

validation of family member images, the subject of the next chapter, were somehow related to the emergence and synthesis of family themes and psychosocial profiles.

Take, for instance, Eddy St. Anne, or any of the young children studied. Eddy's development was better understood by concurrently studying his transactions microscopically at the level of interpersonal subsystems and macroscopically at the level of the family unit subsystem. Both levels of investigation and analysis were essential for understanding the family system-child relationship.

Let us now turn our attention to the two critical tasks that have been identified in this study as central for sustaining the family system-child relationship: resolving "Iness" and "Weness" and developing and validating images.

CHAPTER VII

RESOLVING "INESS" AND "WENESS"

Relationships at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem provided family members (personal subsystems) with sets within which to enact family life scenes. When close-ups were in order, the camera focused on the level of interpersonal subsystems. More panoramic scenes were filmed at the level of the family unit subsystem. The script for this family movie emerged, found its source, predominantly from the manner in which family members attempted to resolve "Iness" and "Weness" and how they developed and validated personal subsystem images. These two family-level tasks served as a script, a set of tasks, from which family members in the 12 families studied, created and engaged in dialogues and from which the drama of family life emanated.

It could be argued that other factors contributed to the form and content of the family system-child relationship. Such factors as parental expectations for children, social and economic conditions, educational and ethnic backgrounds of parents, marital satisfaction, child's temperament, to name a few, were influencing the lives of both children and adults. However, these and other issues seemed to be subsumed under and reflected in the two more encompassing tasks of resolving "Iness-Weness" and developing and validating images. Resolving "Iness-Weness" (how to be alone and how to be together in a family) and developing and validating family member images appeared to be the two most central tasks generic to all the family system-child relationships studied.

Theoretical Background

Each family member, regardless of the particular relationship she may be operating in at any given moment, simultaneously functions as an "I," as a personal subsystem, and as various "We's," as a member of various subsystems and the family unit subsystem (Laing, 1969; Wertheim, 1978). In day-to-day family transactions, children and adults devise strategies for negotiating and obtaining a comfortable balance between being an individual and being a member of the family group.

Achieving a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness," or to use Hess and Handel's (1974) conceptualization of separateness and connectedness, is a necessary task that all families undertake. Hess and Handel (1974) stated:

> Two conditions characterize the nuclear family. Its members are connected to one another, and they are also separate from one another. Every family gives shape to these conditions in its own way. Its life may show greater emphasis on the one or the other, yet both are constitutive of family life. (p. 4)

In their study of families, Hess and Handel observed that family life was a struggle to achieve a satisfactory balance between being an individual in one's family ("Iness") and being a member of the family's shared identity ("Weness"). In order to ensure the survival of the family system and the creation and maintenance of individual family member identities, family members must agree, according to Minuchin (1974), upon a set of interactional strategies that allow each family member to express his unique selfhood without seriously weakening the family's sense of consensual understanding, the shared "Weness" of family system and subsystem identity. Or, as Kantor and Lehr (1975) proposed,

children and adults develop interactional strategies for negotiating distance regulation within and between interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem.

The child's experimentation with being alone and being together can also be viewed as an expression of the particular developmental state that the family is presently undergoing. Kantor (1979) proposed an eight-stage developmental framework for viewing family life cycle functioning and psychosocial evolution. According to Kantor, it is during the fourth and fifth stages, inclusion and decentralization, that parents must decide how they intend to expand family boundaries to include children, if they plan to have children. When children are born into the family, parents must decide how to extend family unit subsystem and interpersonal subsystem boundaries to allow children to experience the extrafamilial world and to eventually leave the family and ultimately form their own families.

A Summary of "Iness-Weness" Resolution.

Different stages of resolving "Iness" and "Weness" were observed in the families studied. In the Williams, the Cabana, and, to a lesser extent, the L'Campion family, the mothers experienced various degrees of conflict differentiating themselves, becoming separate, from their children. Whereas the fathers in these three families seemed to be able to achieve a relatively comfortable balance between being separate from their families, being an "I," and being connected to their families, being a "We," their spouses were observed to exhibit various levels of enmeshment at the level of the mother-children subsystem. This difficulty

in establishing a sense of individuation created some ego confusion, especially for Mrs. Williams and Mrs. Cabana.

At first glance, Mrs. St. Anne and Mrs. Almeida also appeared to be somewhat enmeshed in the lives of their children. A closer look at their family system relationships, however, revealed that both mothers felt comfortable with their respective stages of "Iness-Weness" resolution. Mrs. Almeida was observed to experience "Iness" within her family and especially in her relationship with her husband. Mrs. St. Anne, on the other hand, was observed to experience her emerging sense of "Iness" by establishing relationships with a few close woman friends and her aunt. It appeared that unlike Mrs. Almeida, Mrs. St. Anne's relationship with her husband did not provide her with an intimate space within which to disengage herself from the lives of her children, allowing her to express her "Iness" within the "Weness" of marital intimacy.

In the DiMaggio and Waverly families, family members were resolving the task of separateness and connectedness by engaging in a variety of extended family relationships. Family members in both families were embedded in an extensive network of extended family relationships that appeared to allow children and adults enough psychological space to experiment with "Iness" within the consensual experience of family "Weness." Of particular note was the observation that both Mr. DiMaggio and Mr. Waverly were strongly connected to their children. When home with their children, both men were observed taking an active role in the care of their children. Both men displayed an intense sense of connectedness with the family system-child relationship.

A somewhat different "Iness-Weness" resolution process was observed

to be taking place in the Fisher, the Builder, and the Lancer families. In these families, all three sets of parents were involved in extra-familial as well as intrafamilial experiences. Whereas the DiMaggios and the Waverlys, as well as the Almeidas, were experiencing "Iness," and "Weness" primarily within the structure of family and extended family experiences, the Builders, the Lancers, and especially the Fishers, were observed to be engaged in a greater variety of extrafamilial types of experiences.

In the Lancer family, however, the problem that Mr. and Mrs. Lancer were having with the paternal grandparents was causing the Lancers a great deal of emotional pain. Although, Mr. and Mrs. Lancer were attempting to logically deal with this problem, the paternal grandparents' rejection and subsequent disengagement from the parental subsystem, vividly indicated the salience of intergenerational relationships and the amount of emotional energy such relationships entailed.

As previously noted, when there exists an over-concern for being together, too much connectedness, then psychological enmeshment at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem may develop. The opposite condition develops when there is an over-emphasis upon being separate, achieving too much individuation. Extreme individuation can result in family members feeling disengaged from the "Weness" of the family. Both conditions, enmeshment and disengagement, can have drastic effects on personality development. The task is to arrive at a comfortable balance, to obtain equilibrium, between "Iness" and "Weness," to achieve a sense of "Iness" within "Weness" and "Weness" within "Iness."

The task of resolving separateness and connectedness ("Iness-Weness") was briefly touched upon in the presentation of the Waverly family. "Iness-Weness" resolution will now be presented in more depth in episodes drawn from the Nazareth and Mason families. The Masons and Nazareths were randomly selected to exemplify how two families attempted to achieve a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness."

The Nazareth Family

The family system-child relationship in the Nazareth family appeared to be enmeshed at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. The manner in which the Nazareth's were resolving "Iness-Weness" appeared to greatly influence family member interaction within interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. This sense of "Iness-Weness" enmeshment also seemed to be related to family themes. Two primary themes in the Nazareth family can be summed as "We can only trust each other; you can't trust the outside world" and "Faith in God will take care of everything."

As indicated in the Nazareth's Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 7), interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem were closely connected, with God in the center. Outside of Mrs. Nazareth's mother and some casual relationships with a few relatives and a Catholic Priest, the Nazareth family depended on one another for friendship and nurturance. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth had developed a strong relationship with God, a relationship that connected the family very closely with each other and with the belief structure of the Roman Catholic Church.

Fig. 7. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth.

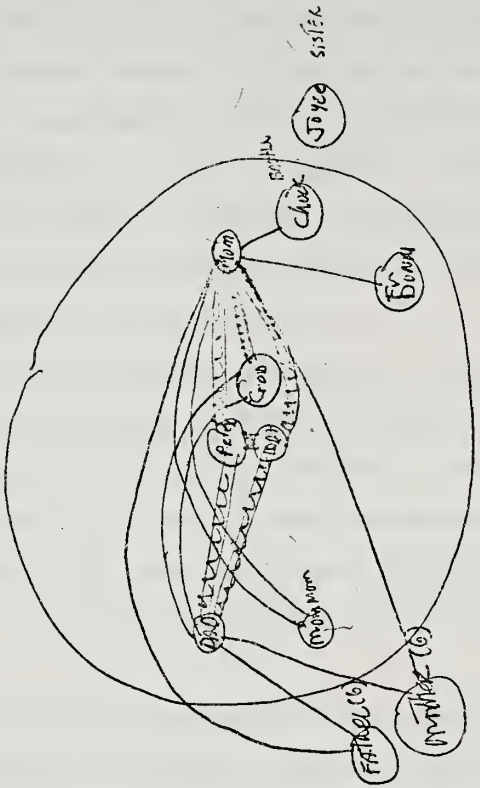

Jo Ann
Chuck
Fr Donn
Mom
God
Peter
Holy Spirit
Mother (c)
Father (c)

Figure 7

Spouse Subsystem.

Mrs. and Mr. Nazareth were observed spending most of their free time together with Luke and John. Except for the close relationship with the maternal grandmother and, to a lesser extent, the maternal aunt, the Nazareths remained privately connected with one another. Very rarely did they socialize without their children. It had been over six months since Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth had gone out to enjoy a movie. They never attended parties or other social functions outside of church related social events. Their life together as a couple was interrelated with the shared "Weness" of the family unit subsystem. A central force connecting the parental subsystem with the sibling subsystem was Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth's strong belief in God.

This strong connectedness with God and family was depicted in the Family Life Space Drawing and observations made of the Nazareth's attendance at church related social functions. As Mr. Nazareth drew God into their family life space, he made the observation that "God should be connected to us to which in turn flows through here (refers to Luke and John). This is what He gives us and we in turn amplify it to the children."

The Nazareths were observed to derive a deep sense of meaning from their connection to each other. When asked what they expected from their marriage, Mrs. Nazareth replied: "I just want us to stay close as we are. To talk to each other. So many people as they get older don't talk to each other." Mr. Nazareth agreed with his wife's comments. Besides his children, he felt that the only other person he was close to was his wife. As he stated: "I have nobody except my wife. This is

my home and I love this home. This is my life."

Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth felt that married life was not complete without children. Mr. Nazareth remarked during the initial family interview:

> If you really look at it as a whole, all the married people that don't have children and who have been married for years, you might find very few of them that can actually say that they're happily married, very happily married. It's not the way to live I think. You can't live without children.

During the final family session, Mrs. Nazareth, like her husband, spoke of the important role children played in keeping a marriage together. She commented: "If anything, it draws you closer together. Because of your concern for them. You know, both of us."

Parent-Children Subsystem.

Caring for their two sons was the central concern for both Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth. When they drew their family life space, they placed their two sons in the center, bounded on one side by Mr. Nazareth and on the other side by Mrs. Nazareth. Mr. Nazareth summed up his feeling towards child rearing during the family video session: "I really don't know about other families but I know that we spend all of our time with our children. All of our time." And, again, during the second family interview he commented on how important rearing children was:

> From the time they wake until the time they go to sleep, you're constantly on edge. You're thinking, 'What's today going to bring?' Because you focus 99 percent of your attention and thoughts on them, I think that's what it's all about when you have a family.

Because they had become so involved with caring for their two sons, Mrs. and Mrs. Nazareth had difficulty allowing Luke and John to

experience their growing sense of independence apart from family "Weness." During one of the family interviews, Mrs. Nazareth commented on how difficult it was for her to become separate from her two sons. As she remarked, "My biggest concern is the children's desire for independence and letting them go."

Although Mr. Nazareth did not express the same degree of concern about his children's growing sense of independence, he nevertheless expressed an intense desire to be close to his two sons. He hoped that because of this closeness, when they grew up and finally embarked upon adult life, they would embody some of the attitudes and behaviors that he had tried to instill in them. During the family video session, as his two sons left to play over a friend's house, Mr. Nazareth made the following observation:

> If you've got an interest in making something with your hands, try to mold something, try to build something with your own hands, it's just like your family. And it's especially with children. You try to mold them. You try to make them so that when they do grow up, they've got a little bit of something that was from you.

Mr. Nazareth's comments gave some insight into what the issue of "Iness" and "Weness" meant to one parent.

The Family Unit Subsystem.

Throughout the study, Mrs. and Mr. Nazareth continuously emphasized the importance of staying close as a couple and as a family. This bounded togetherness, to some extent, served as a shelter protecting the Nazareths from the perceived impersonal outside world. The pervasive feeling that existed was that regardless of what happened economically

or otherwise, the family would survive by maintaining a shared sense of "We" versus "Them" in the outside world. Accordingly, Mr. Nazareth, even though his family could use the extra income, decided not to work a part-time job because it would take time away from his children. Mrs. Nazareth supported her husband's decision. She stated: "I feel the kids are more important. They'll get what they need somehow. And they need him and I more than anything else we can give them."

The only time that either Mr. or Mrs. Nazareth experienced separation from each other and the children was the time Mr. Nazareth had to travel to New York to attend a work-related conference. Their comments on what happened vividly summed up what being together and being apart meant to Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth.

Mrs. N: He left on a Sunday and came home on a Tuesday. You'd think he was gone for two weeks.
Mr. N: I almost started to cry.
Mrs. N: I did down at the station.
Mr. N: And I'm not suppose to cry.
Mrs. N: People say he's only gone for two days but when you're never apart it's a long time. I made those kids sleep in bed with me because I was so afraid. If something did happen I wouldn't get to them where this way they were right there with me.
Mr. N: I don't know, maybe we're too close. Sometimes we get on each other's nerves.

This enmeshment and the corresponding emphasis upon "We" versus "Them," dramatically depicts the relationship between resolving "Iness-Weness" and family themes. In the Nazareth family, the two tasks apparently complemented one another.

Resolving "Iness" and Weness".

How a family resolved the separateness-connectedness task stemmed, in part, from how successful the parents were in resolving "Iness" and "Weness" in their own family of origin. In the case of the Nazareth family, both Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth harbored some residue feelings concerning the manner in which separateness and connectedness was handled in their respective childhood families.

Mr. Nazareth felt that his parents were too distant and somewhat selfish. They did things not for the sake of their children but for themselves. Instead of feeling connected with his parents, Mr. Nazareth, as a child and now as an adult felt disengaged. Recollecting his childhood, he stated:

> The only thing I can remember is there was a period in my life when my mother and father went to Rocky Point. We used to go like every night because they knew someone there who owned a stand. So my sister and I went. I remember that. But we never went for the sole reason to give me the enjoyment because they wanted to go. Whenever we went, we went because my mother and father wanted to go. I would take my children to Fun Land for children, for the sole purpose for them. It was never like that for me.

Although Mrs. Nazareth's image of her childhood was somewhat different, she, like her husband, felt that her parents, in her case her father, could have spent more time with the family, taken more of an interest in his four children. As she remarked:

> I always felt that when I got married, I wanted a man that was going to be there for my children. And be there for me. Because he wasn't there for my mother I think he could have been home more; he could have left one job. I want a big family. I want them to be close.

As can be gleaned from the above comments, Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth both felt that their parents, except Mrs. Nazareth's mother, did not spend enough time with them as children. Accordingly, Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth had made a conscious attempt to become closer with their children, to spend more time together and be connected as a family.

"Iness" and "Weness" in mother-child subsystem. The emphasis upon "Weness" and the difficulty that Mrs. Nazareth had allowing her sons to experiment with "Iness," was observed during naturalistic observations. When Mrs. Nazareth was home alone with John, on this particular afternoon, most of the interaction occurred around the kitchen table. Mrs. Nazareth and John ate together, cooked pudding together, made a puzzle together, and together they cut out name tags for Mrs. Nazareth's Christian Doctrine Class.

Although there were a number of instances during this particular observation where Mrs. Nazareth encouraged her son's autonomy, John's experimentation with his emerging sense of "Iness" seemed to consistently become embedded in the "Weness" of the mother-child sybsystem. It was as if John was connected to his mother by a six-foot cord, allowing him to venture out just so far before the cord tightened, preventing him from going to far.

Even when John was fitting the pieces of a puzzle together, Mrs. Nazareth inquired into what happened last night when she had attended a church service.

Mrs. N: What time did Nanna and Puo go home?
John: I don't know.
Mrs. N: Before you went to bed or after?
John: I wasn't awake.
Mrs. N: Are they coming tonight?

John: (Ignores his mother's question and proceeds with the puzzle construction.)

Later in the afternoon, as John helped his mother prepare the pudding, Mrs. Nazareth resumed her questioning about what happened last night. She was curious to know if her husband made the coffee.

Mrs. N: Who made the coffee last night?
John: I did and that it was good coffee.
Mrs. N: You made it. (Smiles.) Not daddy?
John: (Ignores his mother's question and starts to cut out circles from construction paper.)
Mrs. N: Pappa miss mommy?
John: Yup. (Looks up from his cutting.) She, he, they wanted you to make coffee. Because you make the best coffee.
Mrs. N: (Smiles at John.) I make the best coffee, unh?

"Iness-Weness" in the family unit subsystem. "Iness-Weness" enmeshment in the Nazareth family system-child relationship also was observed at the level of the family unit subsystem. Family unit subsystem enmeshment was observed during the family video session.

After finishing their Sunday dinner, John and Luke decided that they would rather go over and play with Floyd MacFarland, a friend who lived two blocks away, than to remain with their parents. As John and Luke hurriedly put their coats on, Mrs. Nazareth turned to Luke and said: "Don't you want to stay with mommy and daddy? You don't see me all day yesterday, today. You went to sleep so early last night".

In spite of their mother's request to stay home with her and her husband, John and Luke left to play with Floyd. Mr. Nazareth walked his sons to the door and as he watched them leave through the kitchen window, he turned to his wife and softly said: "Outside in the snow. What are you going to do? You got to let them go."

As witnessed in the above episodes, Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth, like many of the parents studied, experienced difficulty allowing their children develop "Iness" apart from the "Weness" of family life. How a family resolved the "Iness-Weness" issue, as in the Nazareth family, greatly influenced the types of experiences the young child was exposed to. For example, Mrs. Nazareth did not allow Luke to attend a Cub Scout overnight because she had reservations about Luke being separated from his family for any substantial amount of time.

The Mason Family

The development and maintenance of boundaries at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem, as depicted in the Nazareth family, was regulated, in part, by family member negotiation of separateness and connectedness: how to be an "I" within the "Weness" of the family world. In the Mason family, the establishment of boundaries for experiencing the intra- and extrafamilial world also was mediated primarily through the validation of "Iness-Weness" images and the establishment of family themes.

Although image development and validation will not be specifically discussed in this chapter, each of the Mason children, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Mason, were developing and validating images of each other. These images were translated into concrete behaviors as family members negotiated comfortable patterns for being together and being apart at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. In the Mason family, children were encouraged to explore their psychobiological identities while simultaneously remaining interconnected as

a family.

At first glance and from initial reports by Mrs. Mason, it appeared that, like the Nazareth family, the Mason family system-child relationship manifested a degree of enmeshment. However, after more time was spent observing the Mason family, it became apparent that the Masons were arriving at a somewhat comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness." It also appeared that, unlike the Nazareth family, the Mason family had developed a relative degree of trust in the outside family world and actively encouraged the children to participate in a variety of experiences with both family and non-family members. Although for some reason themes were difficult to identify in the Mason family, one primary theme was the encouragement of family members to become independent and self reliant. The theme of becoming self reliant was inextricably related to the manner in which separateness and connectedness was being resolved.

The Family Unit Subsystem.

Physical location of house. Sometimes the physical location and/or construction of a home gave some indication as to the manner in which a family handled the "Iness-Weness" task. In the Nazareth family, the shades were usually drawn, even during the daytime. The Mason family lived at the end of a sparsely populated dead-end street. Their large house was relatively isolated from the rest of their neighbors' homes. Mrs. Mason explained the reason why the family moved to this house from their previous house. She stated: "We needed to move. The house was too small. The house was similar to the house we have now, but smaller.

We moved here because it was quiet. Away from things but in walking distance to neighbors." The Mason children had limited contact with neighborhood children. As Mrs. Mason declared: "We really don't socialize that much with neighbors."

Inner family space. The location of their house and their Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 8) pointed to the fact that the Masons derived most of their meaningful experiences from inside their family world. This inner family world consisted of the immediate Mason family and the paternal grandparents. The Masons also connected themsleves to a lesser extent, to Mrs. Mason's sister, to Mr. Masons' sister, and to a paternal great grandmother. Mr. Mason explained that the relationship they had with this inner family was a "trusting relationship."

Inner family relationships gave form and substance to subsystem and family system relationships. This inner family formed the nucleus of Mason family life. "They care about us and the children" was how Mrs. Mason saw this inner family. And, as Mr. Mason asserted, "The periphery will change but the nucleus won't."

Mr. and Mrs. Mason both agreed that when their children married and had families of their own, the nucleus would thus change over time. Mr. Mason commented: "The nucleus probably changes itself. Grandchildren, sons-in-laws, and stuff." Accordingly, the Mason family, through the connecting link of intrafamilial relationships, in time will be expanded, thus perpetuating itself.

However, whereas Mrs. Mason felt that the connecting network of extrafamilial experiences and relationships that her children would eventually develop would exert a significant influence on their lives,

Fig. 8. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Mason.

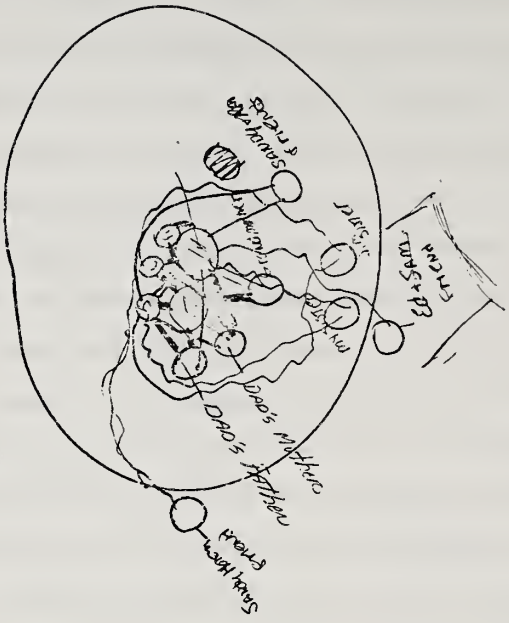

Sandy and friends
Jason
Ed + Sam + friend
Mom
Dad's mother
Dad's father
Sandy Mom friend

Figure 8

Mr. Mason did not feel the same. He asserted that there was a sharp difference between intra- and extrafamilial relationships. Mr. Mason firmly believed that enduring and emotionally meaningful relationships were the only kind of experiences that could exert a lasting influence on his children. When discussing the influence of Robbie's playgroup teacher, Mr. Mason pointed out to his wife the difference between being an "I" connected to the family and being an "I" connected to a social group. He made the following comment: "You're talking about trying to compare relationships or whatever. You can't. (Pause.) You're talking about apples and oranges." Thus, Mr. Mason strongly felt that extrafamilial relationships, besides not having much impact on his children, could not even be compared to inner family relationships.

What in fact Mr. Mason questioned was whether or not extrafamilial influences could ever penetrate family boundaries and thus shape the lives of family members. For example, Mr. Mason felt that the greatest influence on him as a parent had been what he and his wife had shared together rearing children. According to Mr. Mason, it was just these daily family experiences, the realities of living within the intimacy of one's family, that exerted the greatest influence on family member development.

Resolving "Iness" and "Weness".

A central task operating in all the families studied was family members' negotiation and monitoring of social space: how to nurture family member individuality within the various interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. And so it was with the Mason family.

Mr. Mason wanted his children to become more self disciplined, more independent. Mrs. Mason, on the other hand, was beginning to experience the emotional trauma associated with letting her children, especially her oldest daughter, Mary, become separate, more independent of family "Weness."

Mr. Mason's monitoring of "Iness-Weness". When Mr. Mason arrived home for the law office, which was usually around 6:00 p.m., the remainder of the evening was spent with his family. With his arrival home, Mrs. Mason was able to separate herself from the children and secured some psychological space for herself. As she stated, "When Jim's home, I just go in the other room and give him equal time."

A typical weekday evening found Mr. Mason sitting in his easy chair in the living room, intermittently reading the newspaper as he kept an eye on what his children were doing. Mr. Mason's position from his chair functioned as a reference point around which parent-child and child-child interaction, at least in the evening, revolved. Mr. Mason, from his look-out position in his chair, spacially served as a connection point, a space where subsystem interaction interfaced, merging in the form of Mason family "Weness." From this central location, the Mason children were free to branch out and involve themselves in a variety of activities, alone or together. When the children played in the living room, Mr. Mason periodically monitored their behavior, glancing up from reading the newspaper to check his children's play. Often, the children sought out their father's attention by walking over to his chair and asking him to check a homework assignment, play a game of cards, or asking for permission to get a snack.

Mrs. Mason's monitoring of "Iness-Weness". When the children left this central living room space to play either alone or together in another part of the house, Mrs. Mason was usually the one responsible for periodically checking in on what they were doing. Although Mr. and Mrs. Mason sometimes alternated between their distance regulation roles, separateness and connectedness in the Mason household was mediated through Mr. Mason's monitoring of subsystem interaction at interface in the living room and Mrs. Mason's monitoring of subsystem interaction when children decided to separate from the family unit subsystem and played alone in, for example, their respective bedrooms.

Father-children distance regulation function. Mr. Mason was observed monitoring separateness and connectedness during one family observation. After dinner Mr. Mason retired to his easy chair in the living room. As he picked up the newspaper and began to read, Robbie came over and asked him if he wanted to play a game of cards.

Robbie: Want to play some cards?
Mr. M: Not right now.
Lori: Play cards. (Crawls over to where Robbie is seated.)
Mr. M: (Looks over the top of his newspaper.) Why don't you and Lori play cards?
Robbie: She doesn't know how.
Mr. M: Why don't you teach her?
Robbie: (Sits down on the floor approximately three to four feet from where Mr. Mason is seated and proceeds to play a game of cards with Lori.)
Mr. M: (Glances over at Lori.) Robbie playing cards with you?
Mary: (Colors at a table in the corner of the living room.
Mr. M: (Puts his paper down and walks over to join the card game.)
Mary: (Gets up and follows her father.) Can I play?
Mr. M: Why don't you just color. (Sits down and teams up with Lori to play Robbie a game of cards.)

After a few minutes of playing Fish, Robbie and Lori decided to play another card game. Mr. Mason remained with them, instructing Lori how to play. Then when he perceived that they didn't need his assistance, he returned to his chair and resumed reading the newspaper. Mary continued her drawing while Mrs. Mason cleaned in the kitchen. Robbie and Lori continued to play cards until Lori started to throw the cards in the air. Robbie became upset with Lori and yelled at her.

Mr. M: (Looks up from his newspaper.) Robbie!
Robbie: She doesn't know how to play. (Gets up and walks over to where Mary is drawing.) You're making, you're making jacks.
Mary: No I'm not. I'm making this. (Holds up a picture that she drew.)
Robbie: You're making this?
Mary: (Frustrated with Robbie's interference, she mumbles a few words to herself.)
Mr. M: (Puts his newspaper down and looking over at Robbie.) She should know what she's making!
Robbie: (Immediately backs away from Mary and proceeds to watch her draw.)
Mr. M: (Resumes reading the newspaper.)
Mrs. M: (Quietly enters the room and initiates a game of cards with Lori.)

In the above episode, the reader may perceive that Robbie has been left out, that Mr. Mason was in fact consciously ignoring Robbie and that he was treating his son in a somewhat authoritarian manner. However, another interpretation, and one which reflects a family-level perspective rather than a parent-child viewpoint, was that through distance regulation strategies Mr. Mason was attempting to allow each of his children to experience a sense of "Iness" within the "Weness" of the sibling subsystem. On another level, Mr. Mason also was enacting the family theme of nurturing self reliant behavior in his children. Thus, his behavior in this episode was in tandem with an important family

theme and with the manner in which "Iness" and "Weness" was being handled in the Mason family.

And, finally, Mr. Mason's interactional style with Robbie can also be seen as a response to the image that Robbie held in the Mason family. Robbie was pictured as being an active and somewhat disruptive child. Mr. Mason's distance regulation strategy in relation to Robbie could be interpreted as an attempt to appropriately respond to Robbie's temperamental and somewhat intrusive behavior and the corresponding image that this psychobiological profile engendered in the Mason family system.

Mother-children distance regulation function. When Mary was born, Mrs. Mason worked full-time to help finance her husband's law school education. Child care was provided by Mr. Mason's mother. This arrangement lasted from when Mary was 5-months old until she was 4. Mrs. Mason also worked part-time when Robbie was born, leaving Mary and Robbie again with her mother-in-law and sometimes with a part-time babysitter. As a result of feeling like a part-time mother, Mrs. Mason, with the birth of Lori, now spent all of her time with her children. This experience, coupled with the death of her own mother, has fostered in Mrs. Mason a close attachment to her children.

Although Mrs. Mason realized that with age children needed to separate from their parents and experience their emerging sense of "Iness," she still demonstrated some ambivalence about letting Mary leave the "Weness" of the mother-child subsystem. During the first family interview, Mrs. Mason summed up the difficulty she was having resolving the issue of "Iness" and "Weness." She stated:

> Mary will go to their house (grandparents) for a week and not give it a second thought. She'll stay for a week and not even care about coming home. I want her to be that way. I want her to be able to go out of the house and not want to cling to me. But on the other hand, I say, 'Gee, you know, she's just so comfortable and so secure but that's what I want.'

However, verbal reports without verification from observations, were often misleading. Unlike Mrs. Nazareth, Mrs. Mason was observed encouraging in her children a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness." She structured experiences for Robbie and Lori that appeared to foster their independence. On a number of occasions, Mrs. Mason was observed facilitating Robbie's and Lori's involvement in separate activities while simultaneously performing domestic activities such as washing dishes and sewing. Nevertheless, whereas Mr. Mason seemed to be able to establish a clear boundary between himself and his children, maintaining a sense of personal subsystem individuation, Mrs. Mason sometimes appeared hesitant in separating herself from her children. Mrs. Mason's reluctance to disconnect herself from her children was most evident when Mary took over some of Mrs. Mason's "mothering" responsibilities.

The task of establishing a balance between "Iness" and "Weness," as it was expressed in the mother-children subsystem, was vividly exemplified during the family video session. Mrs. Mason left her cleaning and sat down in a chair approximately 10 feet from where Mary was reading Robbie and Lori a story. As Mary read the story, Lori looked up from her book and glanced over at her mother.

Lori: (Catches her mother's eye.) What donut. (Refers to the donuts they had for breakfast.)
Mrs. M: (Affectionately.) You're full of donuts.
Lori: More donuts.
Mrs. M: Yeah, you can't eat more donuts.
Lori: I eat donuts.
Mrs. M: (Softly.) Nooo!
Lori: I eat donuts. (Laughs.)
Mrs. M: Are you reading the story?
Mary: (Continues to read the story to Robbie.)
Robbie: (Listens attentively.)
Lori: (Mimics her mother.) Nooo!
Mrs. M: (Leans forward in her chair.) Read to me. Read me the story.
Lori: (Gets up and walks over to where her mother is seated.) More donuts.
Mrs. M: Read me a story first. (Points to the book Lori is holding.) Is that about Winnie the Pooh? Read to me. Want to sit on my lap? (Picks Lori up and sits her on her lap. Smiles at Lori and begins reading her a story.)

The preceding incident illustrated Mrs. Mason's reluctance to separate herself entirely from the sibling subsystem, especially when Mary was performing a caregiver function in the family system-child relationship. In this episode, Mrs. Mason appeared to be somewhat uncomfortable being alone, being an "I" within the context of sibling "Weness," and thus persuaded Lori to join her in reading a story. This episode also reflected Mrs. Mason's image of herself in the family as a "caring mother" and how image development and validation, the subject of Chapter VIII, helped to monitor the family system-child relationship.

Comments

Most human beings require the nurturance provided by intimate relationships, in this case the intimacy that came from living in a family, to fully develop biological and psychological potentialities. Yet, human

beings also require a certain amount of separateness, time to be alone and to reflect upon and experience one's sense of individuality apart from one's membership in a family and/or social group. When an individual is unable to experience and develop a sense of "Iness" within the "Weness" of the family group, as was the case in the Nazareth family, the potential for enmeshment occurring is greatly enhanced. The enmeshed individual often experiences difficulty developing a self apart from the collective "Weness" of the family. Such enmeshment may prevent an individual from being able to think, feel, and act for herself. The clinical implications involving enmeshment have been well documented in the therapeutic literature.

Take, for example, the case of Liza Waverly. As mentioned previously, the Waverly family theme emphasized family "Weness." During the family video session, Liza commented how she enjoyed the luxury of being apart from her sisters, especially when she slept on a bunk above a younger sister who liked to talk when Liza tried to sleep. Liza and Roberta alternated between sleeping on the top bunk above Jennifer and sleeping alone on the couch/bed in the adjacent room. Liza's comments summed up how she attempted to deal with the separateness-connectedness task in her family. She remarked:

> Because when you're in there, the bottom one talks to you. (Walks into the adjacent room.) And in this room, you can have no one to bother you unless you get out of bed and come in here. (Walks back into their joint bedroom.)

A potential danger equally exists when an individual becomes disengaged from the intimacy of interpersonal and family unit subsystem relationships. In this instance, the individual becomes too

differentiated from the shared "Weness" of the family. Again, clinical research is replete with case histories of children and adults who have been abandoned and rejected by their families and, as a result, reportedly experienced difficulty developing and maintaining intimate relationships.

In this study, disengagement was observed only in adults. Mrs. Cabana, Mr. Lancer, and Mr. Nazareth, due to a variety of reasons, experienced deep emotional pain separating from their own parents. In all three instances, the only way in which they could experience themselves as individuals was to become disengaged from their parents. The effects of this disengagement, on themselves and on their families, could not be ascertained from the data collected. However, in the case of Mrs. Cabana, the emotional hurt associated with her disengagement from her parents appeared to have some bearing on her relationships with her two sons.

Resolving "Iness-Weness".

Arriving at a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness" was an essential task facing each of the families studied. Although research limitations prevented a more in depth analysis of the structure and function of this task, the data obtained from the families provided some insight into the manner in which each family attempted to resolve separateness and connectedness: being an individual in one's family while simultaneously maintaining a sense of "Weness" that came from the shared experience of living in a family.

A number of observations were made concerning the separateness-connectedness task. To begin with, the "Iness-Weness" task appeared to

be interrelated with the development of interpersonal subsystem psychosocial profiles and the development of family themes. Resolving separateness and connectedness also appeared, as witnessed with Mrs. Mason, to be related with the validation of family member images. Just how these variables were related, what systemic processes were contributing to their synthesis, was, at this point in time, unclear and beyond the scope of this dissertation.

There did appear to exist, however, a reciprocal relationship between and among the creation and maintenance of interpersonal subsystem profiles and family themes and the resolution and validation of "Iness" and "Weness" images. The synthesis of these variables created an interior psychosocial family environment which appeared to mediate the family system-child relationship. The particular psychosocial organization of this family milieu often seemed to determine the types of experiences the young child was exposed to and how these experiences were interpreted.

One final note concerning the separateness-connectedness task. Based upon the families investigated, it appeared that obtaining a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness" was a time-related, developmental task, which depending upon the family, was related to other ancillary factors such as educational and ethnic background, family composition, developmental changes in the children, and socioeconomic status. Take the cases of the DiMaggio and the L'Campion families. Upon follow-up, it was discovered that the DiMaggios felt that it was in the best interest of their family to move out of the paternal grandfather's house. The DiMaggios thus moved into their own tenement. After they made this

move, a move that Mrs. and Mr. DiMaggio gave much thought to, family members reported and were observed to experience a greater sense of ego differentiation. This new sense of psychological and physical separateness appeared to allow family members to better appreciate not only each other but extended family members as well. Mr. and Mrs. DiMaggio's relationship with Dominic, the paternal grandfather, was reported to be the best it had been in a long time.

Although involving different variables, a similar situation occurred in the L'Campion family. A follow-up visit revealed that Mrs. L'Campion was better able to experience her emerging sense of "Iness" once she and her family, most noticeably her husband, validated Mrs. L'Campion's dual image of being a mother and being a professional teacher. The validation of this mother-teacher image, coupled with the L'Campion children's development of initiative, in the case of Patti, and autonomy, in the case of Janice, all seemed to be contributing to Mrs. L'Campion's resolution of "Iness" and "Weness." What was a problem when the study began had been resolved some 16 months later.

The function that developing and validating images performs in mediating the family system-child relationship has been alluded to in this chapter and will now be discussed at length in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER VIII

DEVELOPING AND VALIDATING IMAGES

When Mr. Waverly referred to his 4-year old daughter Jennifer as "my little pepper pot," he was in fact communicating to Jennifer an image of who she was in the Waverly family and how her personality and behavior differed from that of her two older sisters and younger brother. Although each one of the families studied handled image development and validation in a way that appeared to be congruent with family themes and subsystem profiles, developing and validating family member images (personal subsystem images) was observed as a central task in the 12 families.

The images that family members developed and reflected to each other, coupled with their efforts at resolving "Iness-Weness," were seen as essential tasks in the lives of the families. At times, it seemed that achieving a balance between separateness and connectedness was related to the images family members held of themselves as individuals in their families ("Iness") and of themselves as members of various interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem ("Weness").

Unfortunately, research limitations prevented further inquiry into the possible relationship between family image development and validation and family member negotiation of separateness and connectedness. However, when analyzed from the levels of interpersonal and family unit subsystem relationships, the task of developing and validating images was uncovered as being central to the psychosocial organization of the family system-child relationship.

Theoretical Background.

The function that images perform in fostering personality development has been a concern of clinicians for some time. However, the role that images play in structuring parent-child interaction and relationships has received little, if any, concern from child development researchers.

The development of family member images and the manner in which these images are validated, image congruence, was identified by Hess and Handel (1974) as a process central to family organization and family interaction. Likewise, in their ecological study of families, Kantor and Lehr (1975) reported that family and family member images were central to understanding family system process. Based upon this study and his clinical work with families, Kantor (1979) has proposed a conceptual framework of critical image development and identification.

An image, according to Kantor and Lehr (1975), is "An internalized representation of an action made or observed". (p. 241) Images can exist in many forms: as memory, as a mental picture, as a sentiment or feeling, or as an idea. The personal subsystem image that each family member develops can be viewed as an internalized representation of how family members think and feel about one another's unique psychobiological profile. As Hess and Handel (1974) stated:

> One's image of another is the product of one's direct experience with the other and of evaluations of the other by third parties. From this experience, from evaluations of it and elaborations on it in fantasy, a conception of another person is developed, a conception which serves to direct and shape one's action to the other and which becomes a defining element of the interpersonal relationship. (p. 7)

As illustrated in the research of Jules Henry (1971), each family member develops an image of self ("Iness") and self in relation to other ("Weness") via the testimony communicated by other family members, especially parents. These images mediate interaction between and among family members, serving as, what Kantor (1979) terms, behavior guides. These imagistic behavior guides monitor family member interaction.

When two people join and form a dyadic family unit subsystem, they bring with them images of self that have their origins in their childhood families. As Fraiberg, Adelson, and Shapiro (1977) clinically documented, parental images have their origins in childhood experiences, especially experiences with family members. Over time, the couple develops, according to Kantor's conceptual framework, a shared image, an image of "Weness," while concurrently maintaining and building upon their sense of "Iness." With the inclusion of children into the family, new interpersonal subsystems emerge, each equipped with its unique set of images, as well as the remembrance of pre-existing images. Through family member mutual accommodation to and validation of images at the levels of interpersonal and family unit subsystem relationships, the family system-child relationship is imbued with meaning and purpose.

Summary of Images of Children.

The data collected in this study clearly showed that family members developed images of each other and themselves that were still being formed and changed as the family and family members passed through various developmental stages. Images of children appeared to embody the child's particular psychobiological profile. The same process was

reported to have taken place with adults when they were children.

In the DiMaggio family, Michelle was pictured as being reflective and easy to get along with. Linda, her 2-year old sister, was described and observed as being somewhat impulsive and difficult to get along with. As a result, Linda was seen in the negative image of the difficult child while Michelle was pictured in accordance with a positive, "good girl" image.

In the Fisher family, Carl Fisher was described as having "ants in his pants" and as being somewhat difficult to handle, a child who possessed an overabundance of energy. However, Carl's active behavioral style, as reflected in his "ants in the pants" image, was expressed positively in Carl's athletic ability, a trait for which Carl received a great deal of parental support. Carl's sister Kathy was developing a "second mother" image to her two younger siblings. Accordingly, Kathy's behavior was observed to be somewhat nurturant and respondent to Carl and Jimmy. One-year old Jimmy, from the data secured, had not yet developed any one overriding image that distinguished him from Kathy and Carl.

Four-year old Eddie St. Anne was developing the image of being an impulsive and somewhat aggressive child. Eddie's image seemed to be similar to the image held by Linda DiMaggio. Mary St. Anne was pictured by her parents and observed to be dependent upon adults and easily led, especially when confronted by her brother Eddie. Mary was seen as a follower in her family while Eddie was observed to be an initiator and opposer.

Floyd Builder was described by his father as being a "fighter" and protector of his older brother. Floyd was thus observed as being

physically aggressive. Floyd's older brother William was depicted as being sensitive and intellectually gifted, as being cerebral and reflective in contrast to Floyd's impulsive behavioral style.

In each of the families studied, one child was usually observed as being somewhat difficult to manage. In the Lancer family, 13-month old Tommy Lancer was categorized into the difficult child image. Besides being somewhat irritable, Tommy was very active and never seemed to run out of energy. Four-year old Jamie Lancer was envisioned with a completely opposite image. Jamie was described by his parents as manifesting a pleasant and easy going behavioral style, possessing none of the difficult personality traits displayed by his young brother. When asked to describe his two sons, Mr. Lancer stated that Jamie was like "pastel colors," calm and reflective while Tommy was like "bright colors," active and impulsive.

Robbie Mason possessed an inordinate amount of energy and consequently was reported and observed to be somewhat difficult to manage. After the hard time they experienced with Robbie, the Masons were reluctant to have another child. To put it quite simply, Mr. and Mrs. Mason were afraid that their next child would resemble Robbie and not their eldest daughter Mary. Mary was viewed as a reflective and nurturant child who was pleasant to be with. However, the Masons did have another child and to their relief Lori Mason resembled her sister Mary and not her brother Robbie. Accordingly, Lori has been imbued with the image of the "joy-to-have-child."

John and Luke Nazareth were observed and reported to display similar personality traits as those of their parents: Luke resembling his

mother and John his father. The image of John was one of "a comedian." He did not take things seriously and appeared to "have a wise crack about everything." Luke, like his mother, was observed to be more serious and somewhat more sensitive than his brother. In the Nazareth family, John was reported to be an initiator, a leader and opposer, while Luke was reported to be more of a follower; he tended to let other children, especially his brother, talk for him.

A similar situation existed in the Waverly family. Roberta, the eldest child, was seen as being independent and a leader. Liza was observed to be more of a follower, a child whose identity was being overshadowed by Roberta's initiating function in the family. Jennifer Waverly, on the other hand, was imbued with the "pepper pot" image. She was observed as a child who, like Robbie Mason, was full of energy and who appeared to have a mind of her own. R.J., the only male child in the Waverly family, was depicted as a "tiger." He was constantly referred to as "daddy's little boy" and was constantly reminded of his strong will and autonomous behavior.

Images provided the observer with a simple behavioral profile of each child, giving some indication of the child's personality and how family members perceived the child. However, there were many components of the young child's psychosocial development that could not be captured and communicated via image identification and thus were not mentioned in this study. Likewise, images of family members appeared to be more complex than what was described in this study. Many children developed more than one image and, as observed in follow-up sessions, images seemed to change over time in some families, manifesting an

epigenetic quality.

How images were developed and validated in the families investigated is discussed in more detail with episodes drawn from the L'Campion and Cabana families. These two families have been randomly selected to present in more depth the image validation task. In Chapter IX the development and validation of images is discussed in conjunction with the other three identified tasks as they occurred in the Williams and Almeida families.

The L'Campion Family

Through the task of creating and validating individual, personal subsystem images, the L'Campion family attempted to establish a comfortable pattern for being together as a family and for being separate as individuals. In the L'Campion family, family members were each imbued with a central, critical image of self: who they were in the family and how their personality and behavior differed from that of other family members. Often these personal subsystem images helped to guide interpersonal and family unit subsystem interaction. These images, like family themes, appeared to function as reference structures around which interaction not only revolved but was imbued with meaning and purpose.

Mr. L'Campion.

Mr. L'Campion was observed to view himself as an independent and critical thinker, a person, who after considering all the facts, was able to arrive at a decision and then proceeded to plan a course of action and dictate to his family the conclusions. When considering the

kinds of experiences that he felt were beneficial for his children, for example, Mr. L'Campion approached such decisions with a critical eye. Whether it pertained to diet, financial matters, or child management issues, Mr. L'Campion first researched and weighed all the alternatives before deciding upon a course of action. Once he did arrive at a decision, he proceeded, without hesitation, to initiate a course of action.

Mr. L'Campion's investigative image and subsequent behavioral style was, for the most part, validated by his family. This investigative style was witnessed on a number of occasions. For example, Mr. L'Campion had invested a great deal of time and energy researching the field of nutrition. His investigative efforts had convinced him that proper diet and preventive health practices led to good physical and mental health. Accordingly, Mr. L'Campion assisted in planning the family menu. He also was observed supplementing his family's diet with a variety of vitamins.

Enactment of Mr. L'Campion's image. The investigative component of Mr. L'Campion's "leader of the family" image was observed to be democratically shared by himself and his wife. They tended to make joint decisions. The image that Patti and Janice received, however, could be summed up as "I'm your father and I know best." In this respect, Mr. L'Campion's investigative, "leader in the family" image, besides containing elements of the family's power hierarchy, structured a competitive struggle between Patti and himself. Patti often was observed being placed in the position of having to follow her father's decisions or to assert her sense of initiative and oppose her father's

strong initiating efforts. Consider the following example.

While eating supper one evening, Mr. L'Campion instructed Patti on the nutritional importance of fish. Mr. L'Campion felt so strongly about including fish in the family diet that he left Patti without any alternatives than to eat fish for dinner or to go without supper.

Patti: (Turns towards her mother.) Could you be kind to me and not give me fish.
Mrs. L: Why?
Patti: I don't like fish, don't want any. I just noticed that I don't like fish.
Mr. L: (Interrupts.) You just noticed it. (Laughs.)
Patti: (Plays with the piece of fish on her dish.)
Mrs. L: Patti!
Patti: What?
Mrs. L: That's what you're having for supper.
Mr. L: Fish happens to be one of your best foods.
Patti: (Voice becomes louder.) I'm not having none.
Mr. L: You don't have to eat. Don't eat anything.
Mrs. L: You're not going to have anything.

Mr. L'Campion's "I'm your father and I know best" image and Patti's attempt to oppose her father's initiating efforts again were depicted in the following scene that took place prior to Patti's bedtime. Just before Patti and Janice were to go to bed, Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion made sure that Patti and Janice took some vitamin C.

Mr. L: Crunch it and swallow it right away.
Patti: I don't like it.
Mr. L: Do it as you're drinking your juice.

As the study progressed, changes appeared in the relationship between Patti and her father. Instead of opposing her father whenever he enacted his "I'm your father and I know best" image, Patti was observed to more comfortably assert herself, taking on a bystander function rather than the opposer function. Consider the following brief episode that occurred during the final session.

For the better part of the evening, Mr. L'Campion had been working on devising a payroll program on the computer. When he wasn't sitting at the computer terminal, he was sitting at the kitchen table trying to figure out the problem by going over it with his wife. Finally, with the entire family sitting at the kitchen table, somewhat tired of hearing Mr. L'Campion explaining how he was going to solve the computer problem, Patti intervened, subtely summing up how she and Janice felt about their father's preoccupation with his new project.

Mr. L: After a couple of weeks I'll have the computer down.
Patti: (Looks directly at her father.) It's going to take longer than that.
Mrs. L: (Laughs.)
Patti: (Continues to look directly at her father.) Much longer. Probably by the end of December.
Mr. L: (Laughs.) She may be right!

Mrs. L'Campion.

Whereas Mr. L'Campion's image of himself was that of an independent and critical thinker, Mrs. L'Campion saw herself as a caring mother, capable of providing a good educational environment for her two daughters. Up until accepting a teaching position the previous year, Mrs. L'Campion had remained home to take care of Janice and Patti. Like many mothers of preschoolers, her image of herself was related to her child rearing responsibilities. Accordingly, Mrs. L'Campion was convinced that she and her husband exerted the only really important influence on their daughters.

Enactment of Mrs. L'Campion's image. Mrs. L'Campion's feeling that she was primarily responsible for establishing the range of experience for her daughters was depicted in the Family Life Space

Drawing (Figure 9).

Mrs. L: (Looks at the drawing.) I don't feel any strong influence other than spouse and children in our immediate living space.

Mr. L: Well, there's a slight influence from our parents. It's slight. (Places his parents inside the family life space.) My father bugs my ass but--

Mrs. L: (Interrupts.) Are you talking about influence on life style or influence in general? Influence on thinking? (Pause.) I don't feel they're an influence on me at all.

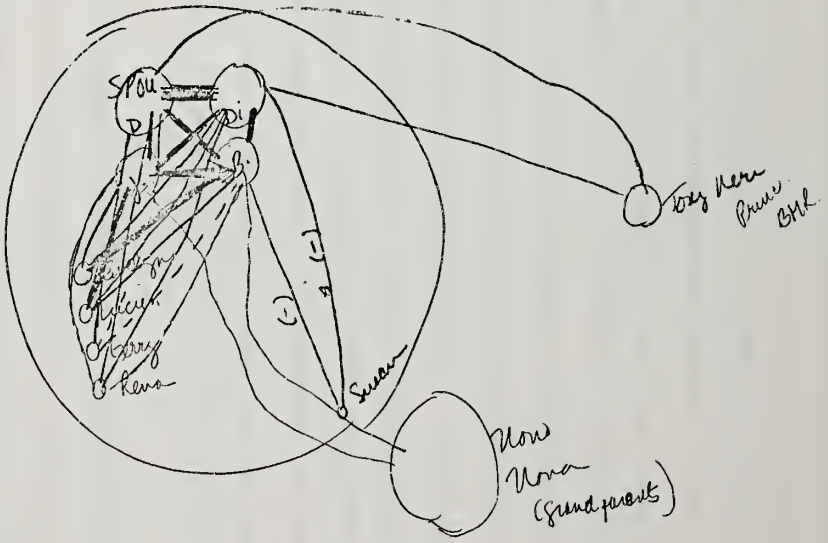
Mr. L: You have to go over their house and visit them once a week, that's an influence on 'ya. They come and plant a garden and he tells me what to do. That's an influence. They're an influence just by being there.

Mrs. L: But I wouldn't consider it influence enough to be part of the living space of this house.

A few moments later, after she and her husband had completed their family drawing, Mrs. L'Campion reflected on the people that were inside their family life space. She commented on how much she felt that these people, although important to her family, did not exert a significant influence on her children. In keeping with her image as a caring mother and the most important influence in her children's lives, she remarked: "I never think about anybody having that much influence."

Development of a new image. Mrs. L'Campion's new teaching position at the Junior High School meant that she spent less time at home with her daughters. Teaching full-time necessitated a change in Mrs. L'Campion's image of herself, a change not only in how she spent her time away from her family but also how her meaning dimension in her personal life was to be satisfied. Whereas Mr. L'Campion's image of himself inside his family complemented his image as a professional teacher, Mrs. L'Campion's image

Fig. 9. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion.



Toni replace vis. influences of SUSAN.

Figure 9

of herself as a mother caused some initial apprehension and doubt about how she would integrate her new function as a teacher into her mother image.

Enactment of this new image. On a number of occasions Mrs. L'Campion expressed concern about her new teaching responsibilities interferring with her image of herself as a caring mother. The choice between being a full-time mother and a full-time teacher was creating a great deal of conflict in Mrs. L'Campion. One afternoon, after the children had just finished their snack, Mrs. L'Campion remarked how she could no longer have the children emotionally dependent on her. Although she realized that her children, especially Patti, needed to become more independent of her, Mrs. L'Campion nevertheless experienced some reservations about the fact that her image of being a full-time mother, the central most important person in the lives of Patti and Janice, was no longer being actualized, especially since she no longer spent her entire day caring for them.

The conflict between her caring mother image and her image as a professional teacher surfaced one afternoon as Mrs. L'Campion and Patti talked at the kitchen table. Since starting work, Mrs. L'Campion, in order to save some time in the morning, had Patti buy her lunch at school instead of making a lunch for her to take to school.

Mrs. L: (Looks affectionately at Patti.) You still would rather have mommy make your lunch.
Patti: (Looks somewhat tired.) I don't like, you know, why I don't like having to buy everything.
Mrs. L: Why?
Patti: Because the milk cartons aren't too good drinking in them. Milk pours into my food.

Her desire to perform both responsibilities was causing Mrs. L'Campion to doubt herself as a mother. This self doubt about performing her "caring mother" function was summed up one afternoon when Mrs. L'Campion arrived home from school. She made the comment upon entering the house: "This is the home of a working wife."

Feeling comfortable with an image. As previously mentioned, Mr. L'Campion felt very comfortable with his image both inside his family and in the outside world. Mrs. L'Campion, on the other hand, was experiencing some difficulty adjusting to and integrating her newly emerging dual image, a caring mother-professional teacher. Ms. and Mrs. L'Campion vividly exemplified how they both felt about their respective images of self inside the family when they responded to the question regarding what they would like to change about themselves.

> Mrs. L: I would like to be spending more time with the children.
>
> Mr. L: What would I change? Pretty hard. Ah, because I don't need anything. I just don't desire anything. If I could live this way the rest of my life, I would be happy.

Image of Patti.

As separate personal subsystems, Patti and Janice developed images that reflected and confirmed their unique psychobiological profiles. Yet, because they were members of a same-sex sibling subsystem that was close in age, they concurrently held a joint image of "Weness," an image of Patti and Janice together as sisters who belonged to the L'Campion family.

Image reflecting psychobiological profile. Patti, the first born child, was, according to her parents, an easy child to care for. From the moment she was born, she displayed a pleasant disposition. As an infant, she quickly established regular eating and sleeping schedules. Although she had periods when she became irritable, such states were infrequent and easy to handle. In all, Patti was an enjoyable infant and toddler. Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion reported no difficulty caring for Patti during her first three years.

Around the age of 2, Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion began to realize that Patti possessed an "intellectual quickness," to use Mr. L'Campion's words. When compared to other same-age children in the family and in the neighborhood, Patti was observed to speak earlier and to generally be more intelligent, appearing developmentally older than her peers.

As a result of their observations, Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion came to the conclusion that Patti possessed above average intelligence. Their anecdotal observations were confirmed by reports from Patti's nursery school teacher. According to her teacher, Patti was developmentally ahead of her peers in language and cognitive skills. Except for some confusion caused when the local Child Find screening team assessed Patti to be somewhat below average in gross motor skills, Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion continued to hold an image of Patti as an intellectually gifted child who was easy to get along with.

Patti's precocious language and cognitive development and her parents' belief in her talents, despite the Child Find diagnosis, validated, to some degree, Mr. L'Campion's image of being able to arrive at and hold firm to a decision after weighing all of the pertinent

information and Mrs. L'Campion's image of being a nurturant and competent mother. Patti's pleasant disposition and above average cognitive skills were transformed into an image of her that was in tandem with respective parental images.

Following a family observation, Mr. L'Campion reflected upon the parental role in confirming Patti's image of being intellectually gifted. He stated:

> Well, one of the things I don't think you would find is kids her age doing math problems at four. You're seeing the effect of the educational influence on her behavior. The first thing she asked me was to make problems. You wouldn't tend to see that type of situation happening with some families.

Validation of Patti's image. This concern over Patti's precocious development motivated Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion to provide Patti with intellectual challenges whenever the situation allowed. Mr. L'Campion was often observed engaging Patti in a variety of memory and concentration games. He also gave Patti a variety of math problems to solve. Mrs. L'Campion seemed to enjoy giving Patti books to read and reading books to Patti that were geared for older children.

The following episode typified Mrs. and Mr. L'Campion's interest in nurturing Patti's intellectual development.

After dinner, Patti and Janice played in the living room while Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion remained in the kitchen relaxing over a second cup of coffee. Janice and Patti became involved in a game in which the goal was to name the capital of each state. After a few minutes of playing the game with Janice, Patti became upset with her sister's inability to follow the rules.

Patti: (Calls her father.) Daddy, are you doing the states with me or what?
Mr. L: Couple of states. (Gets up from the kitchen table and walks into the living room and sits on the floor next to Patti and Janice.)
Patti: No, not a couple.
Mr. L: What?
Patti: A little?
Mr. L: A little. You want to play the game. I'll count to five. You can find the state before five, I'll give you a penny. Find the capital of Indiana.
Patti: (Immediately points to the capital of Indiana.)
Mr. L: O.K., find Oregon.
Patti: (Immediately points to the capital of Oregon.)
Mr. L: Find Arkansas.

The game continued until Patti identified the capitals of all 50 states.

Image of Janice.

Unlike Patti, Janice was not born with an easy temperament. Janice's psychobiological profile was reported to more irritable and irregular than her sister's. Janice tended to be a more difficult child to handle. Mrs. L'Campion reported that as an infant Janice cried more and displayed irregular sleeping and eating patterns. Developmentally, Mr. and Mrs. L'Campion observed that Janice's verbal and cognitive skills, when compared to Patti, emerged more slowly. However, whereas Patti's large muscle development appeared to be slightly delayed, especially when compared to her cognitive skills, the reverse was true for Janice. Her parents acknowledged that Janice was very well coordinated for her age. To help her nurture her motoric ability, Mrs. and Mr. L'Campion installed a jungle gym in the backyard. Mr. L'Campion was also observed to encourage Janice to perform a variety of gymnastic tricks.

It appeared that Janice's active psychobiological style had been transformed into an image of her as a child whose normal intellectual ability was supplemented with above average physical prowess. The image of Janice as a somewhat temperamental child whose normal intelligence was complemented by above normal physical ability seemed to reaffirm her parents' competence to deal with Janice's particular psychobiological profile.

Enactment of Janice's image. Janice's image of being active and somewhat difficult was exemplified when Patti tried to offer her sister affection. Mrs. L'Campion communicated to Patti that when Janice was in her irritable mood, the best thing one could do was to leave her alone.

Mrs. L: Hey girls. (Looks over to where Janice is pulling at Patti.) Patti. Patti.
Patti: (Tries to kiss Janice.) I'm tring to kiss her.
Mrs. L: She doesn't want to be kissed. We can't kiss people when they don't want to be kissed. Now, please!
Mr. L: (Looks over at Patti.) Hey!
Patti: I want to; I love her. (Starts to cry.)
Mrs. L: I know you love her but she grouchy. We all love her but she's grouchy. What are you going to do? You're going to make her scream.
Janice: (Starts to cry.)
Patti: I want to!
Mrs. L: She doesn't appreciate your kisses. Don't give them to her.
Patti: I like her and I want to give her kisses.
Janice: No! (Turns her back to Patti.)

Defending an Image.

As previously noted, there were many components to each child's psychobiological profile that were not explored in this study.

Likewise, each child also appeared to have developed, or be developing, a variety of images or derivatives of a central personal subsystem image. Patti's image of being "intellectually quick" and "easy to get along with" appeared related to her precocious cognitive development, her first-born position in the family, and to the initiator role she performed in the sibling subsystem.

When functioning at the level of the father-child subsystem, Patti often enacted the opposer, and, more recently, the bystander function in the subsystem. The reverse held true when Patti functioned at the level of the sibling subsystem. When interacting with Janice, Patti usually enacted an initiator function which appeared to correspond with her image as a precocious child. Janice, who held the "difficult to get along with" image and who was also not as intellectually quick as Patti, usually was observed opposing her sister, a behavioral style that seemed to match her "difficult child" image in the family.

The following episode illustrated what happened when a child's image appeared to be challenged. In this case Patti was observed defending the critical image her parents infused in her. Accordingly, Patti had developed strategies for maintaining her cognitive precociousness-initiator image in the sibling subsystem. When she perceived this image to be threatened, Patti initiated moves to defend her sense of "Iness." In the following example, Janice's behavior appeared to interfere with and to threaten Patti's position in the family. Patti, in turn, was observed to take the necessary steps to defend her social space, even if this entailed verbally threatening her sister.

Janice: (Trots into the living room with a blanket over her head.) Patti, Patti, Patti. I'm a princess.
Patti: (Colors in a book, looks up at her sister.) I don't see no princess. You're not a princess. (Voice becomes louder.) Ma, Janice's not, she thinks she's a princess.
Mrs. L: She's a princess.
Patti: No. She's not a princess 'cause she doesn't live in a castle.
Mrs. L: This is a castle.
Patti: (Becomes upset.) This ain't a castle. This is a house!
Mrs. L: Well, what's the difference between a castle and a house?
Patti: Castle and a house makes a big difference.
Janice: (Prances into the kitchen.)
Patti: (Continues drawing.)
Mrs. L: (Starts to prepare dinner.)
Patti: Mommy, I write my name. (Gets up and walks into the kitchen to show her mother her drawing.)
Mrs. L: (Looks at Patti's drawing.) Pretty, pretty good!
Patti: You write it for me.
Mrs. L: (Looks over at Janice who is still dancing with the blanket draped over her.) O.K., Janice. You're getting that dirty.
Janice: Ma, I live in a castle.
Mrs. L: You do. (Writes Patti's name on her drawing.)
Janice: (Stops her dancing and begins to sulk.)
Mrs. L: What's the matter Janice? What's the matter with my princess?
Patti: She's not a princess!
Mrs. L: Why not?
Patti: Because she's ugly.
Mrs. L: Patti!
Janice: (Raises her head from the table.) No! No!
Patti: Yes, sa'.

The above episode depicted how different components of a child's psychobiological profile and subsequent image surfaced in different relationships and how a child will defend herself when another family member challenges this image. If viewed within a more psychological framework rather than within a family-level perspective, Patti's

behavior in the above episode can be interpreted differently. Patti's behavior may be seen as being competitive and as an attempt to assert her power over Janice, something she had difficulty doing when she is with her father. Such behavior may be viewed in terms of sibling rivalry and/or defending one's power and authority.

When viewed within a family-level perspective, however, Patti's strong reaction to her sister being a "Princess" may symbolize, via what the "Princess" image means in the L'Campion family, another level of meaning. Being thought of as a "Princess" might signify to Patti such issues as one's position in the family system-child relationship (e.g., being the eldest child), what psychological qualities are deemed worthy of a "princess" (e.g., being intellectually quick as opposed to being motorically adroit), and the family player part associated with being a "Princess" (e.g., a Princess might be perceived as performing the initiator rather than the opposer part). As witnessed in the above scenario, personal subsystem imagery, in this case the "Princess" image, imbues existing psychological qualities of children with a deeper sense of meaning and purpose, thus providing the researcher with a more accurate understanding of what the particular behaviors, represented via images, mean in the context of the family system-child relationship.

The Cabana Family

To gain insight into the social forces influencing Steve and Marty Cabana's development, it was necessary to understand how their emerging sense of individuality was nurtured within the various Cabana subsystems. Within the psychosocial domains of interpersonal subsystems and the

family unit subsystem, the Cabanas worked to resolve the task of separateness and connectedness. Through the corroborative testimony provided by family members, images of "Iness" and "Weness" were being validated. The Cabana imagistic memory bank appeared to function as an internal gyroscope around which Cabana family interaction revolved. Cabana imagery had its origins in the images of self that Mr. and Mrs. Cabana developed in their respective childhood families and which merged into images of "I" and "We" when they married and formed their own family.

The Origins of Mrs. Cabana's Image.

The oldest of three daughters, Mrs. Cabana entered marriage with an image of herself filled with doubts about her ability to be a competent wife and mother. She pictured herself as a somewhat inconsistent mother who doubted her ability to competently rear her two sons. At one point she referred to herself as being "a bit hysterical." These doubts about becoming a caring and nurturing mother originated from the cold and somewhat rejecting family environment that Mrs. Cabana experienced as a child. Although Mrs. Cabana desperately tried to win the affection of her parents, she had finally come to realize that her parents were incapable of loving her.

Mrs. Cabana remarked that since her father worked long hours, he never spent that much time with his children. Mrs. Cabana made the following comments about her father: "My father wasn't a warm person. I have one sister who hates him." It was always touch and go for Mrs. Cabana. She never experienced unconditional love and acceptance from

her father and mother. As she stated, "One day I'm a rotten daughter, the next day my sister's a rotten daughter."

Mrs. Cabana considered her mother to be extremely "unreasonable" and "rejecting." She described her mother as "The most negative person in the whole world." Mrs. Cabana recalled that her mother never provided her with emotional support, especially during adolescence when Mrs. Cabana needed motherly guidance. When she was pregnant with Steve and then with Marty, her mother never offered Mrs. Cabana any help. It was, according to Mrs. Cabana, as though her mother did not care about her daughter being pregnant. Mr. Cabana remarked how his mother-in-law, to quote him, "Put her through hell." Even to this day. Mrs. Cabana's parents have never shown much interest in Steve and Marty. All her life, Mrs. Cabana has tried in vain to gain her mother's affection. Mrs. Cabana has finally resigned herself to the fact that, as she stated, "You just can't please her."

The Origins of Mr. Cabana's Image.

Mr. Cabana emerged from his childhood and adolescence with an image of himself as a self-made man who was in control of his life. Mr. Cabana's sense of efficacy stemmed mainly from two achievements. First, he had turned the small family grocery business into a very economically successful enterprise. Secondly, he felt that he was emotionally strong enough to overcome his childhood fears without parental support.

The only criticism Mr. Cabana had of his parents was their inability to sensitively handle his fears and anxieties that he experienced

as a child. Subsequently, Mr. Cabana held an image of himself as being understanding of his sons' emotional development. This "emotionally secure" image appeared to have its origins in Mr. Cabana's childhood. As he remarked during a family interview,

> They'd dismiss a lot of things as being ridiculous. I want my kids to come to me with things no matter how ridiculous they may seem. That's very important to me because my parents weren't understanding. I was afraid of things for years that were ridiculous.

Thus, Mr. Cabana had taken a childhood experience and transformed this experience into an adult image. In this case, the experience of his childhood fears of not being understood by his parents had been transformed into the adult image of being able to treat his children with understanding and sensitivity.

Enactment of Adult Images.

Images that developed during childhood were often observed to influence how adults, in the families investigated, reacted to their own children. As a result of particular childhood experiences and the images that these experiences instilled, Mrs. and Mrs. Cabana attempted to avoid repeating mistakes they perceived that their parents committed.

Mrs. Cabana. Mrs. Cabana wanted to provide her children with the opportunity to experience all the things she missed as a child, especially educational experiences. Her parents, besides not giving her love, deprived Mrs. Cabana of certain educational experiences. She stated:

> I would like to see both my children to go to college. That really means a lot to me. I wanted to be a teacher and my family was against it. They would only send me to secretarial school. I would

> like them to go to college and do something. I would love to see them be a doctor. I don't know if we could afford it. Dom would to. (Dom shrugs his shoulders.) You know that you would.

Accordingly, Mrs. Cabana expressed a sincere concern about her sons' academic achievement. She closely monitored their developmental progress, and thus consciously structured the home environment (e.g., having Marty and Steve watch educational television, purchasing a variety of educational materials) to make certain that Steve and Marty were receiving the right kind of intellectual stimulation. When Steve was diagnosed to be developmentally lagging in fine motor skills by a teacher at his playschool, Mrs. Cabana insisted that Steve by evaluated by a licensed psychologist. When the psychologist's report confirmed the teacher's observations, Mrs. Cabana set up a rigorous home curriculum to help Steve develop fine motor skills.

Mr. Cabana. Whereas Mrs. Cabana was concerned primarily with her sons' academic achievement, Mr. Cabana was more intent upon providing his children with emotional understanding. Reacting to his own childhood experiences of not having his fears and anxieties understood by his parents, Mr. Cabana expressed more concern for his sons' psychosocial development than he did for their intellectual development. He pictured himself as an economic provider, the family "breadwinner," and as a "trustworthy guide" to his sons' emotional development.

Mr. Cabana's concern for his children's emotional development and his enactment of his "trustworthy guide" image, was depicted in the manner in which he handled Steve's fear of elephants. Mr. Cabana provided Steve with unconditional emotional support. He commented on the

way in which he handled his son's fear of elephants:

> We tell him, 'Steve, the elephants won't hurt you. The elephants are in a cage and you can just look at them. You don't have to touch them and you don't have to go near them.' We're trying to make him know that elephants, that he doesn't have to be afraid of elephants. But for some reason, he is. I say to Steve, 'Steve, I want you to remember that mommy and daddy will never take you anywhere or do anything with you that we think is going to hurt you. O.K.?' I want him to build confidence in us to know that we won't do anything that is going to harm him unless it happens accidently. I want to put myself in their position and solve their problems.

Validation of Images via Marriage.

Mrs. Cabana entered marriage with an image of herself as being less than an adequate mother, as a child deprived of parental love. Mrs. Cabana was observed to look towards her husband as a source of strength, as a person who provided her with the emotional encouragement needed to feel that she was a caring and nurturing mother. She recalled the exact words Mr. Cabana used when he proposed marriage to her: "No one will be able to give you what I will be able to give you. Will you marry me?"

Mr. Cabana's image of being emotionally strong and a good provider coupled with Mrs. Cabana's image of having doubts about her mothering ability had merged into a conjoint image of a couple who had experienced success in their marriage and family life with minimal assistance from their respective parents. In order to maintain their inner family world, Mrs. and Mrs. Cabana had established a firm boundary around themselves and their sons. Reacting to the rejection of his wife and two sons by his in-laws, Mr. Cabana angrily stated: "I don't give a damn that she

doesn't have a family. Her family is here." Mrs. Cabana viewed her husband's anger as a sign of his emotional support and confirmation of her caring mother image.

The establishment of a firm boundary around the Cabana family appeared to protect the family from stressful situations. For example, when Mr. Cabana's brother's 9-year old daughter died of an incurable illness, it was an emotionally traumatic experience that was felt by the entire Cabana family. Although still grieving the loss of Maria, Mr. and Mrs. Cabana found solace in their inner family space. Mr. Cabana stated:

> It happened; I'm sorry. But my family and my life has to go on. It's going to go on and it's not going to affect my kids. I made up my mind to that. (Turns towards his wife.) And I stopped her from going to the cemetary. And I don't want my kids in the cemetary because they're too young to be in the cemetary. I don't even want them to know that Maria lives there.

Accordingly, the Cabana's boundary-setting strategy, whether it involved establishing boundaries around the parental or sibling subsystem, served to validate Mr. and Mrs. Cabana's image of themselves as individuals, as parents, and as a couple. Within the safe boundaries of the family unit subsystem, Mr. Cabana was able to maintain his image of being in control and providing financial and emotional support to his family. Mrs. Cabana's image of wanting to be a competent mother and wife was validated via her husband's unconditional support of her ability to be a caring wife and mother. Moreover, the boundary that had been created around the Cabanas inner family living space insulated Mrs. Cabana from the potential negative feedback that at times was communicated to her from relatives and other mothers at her son's

playschool.

Images of Steve and Marty.

Each of the Cabana children was in the process of developing an image of himself that reflected the interactive effects of parental images of self, their conjoint image as a couple, and each child's particular psychobiological profile. The Cabana's imagistic memory bank, which in turn had developed as Mrs. and Mr. Cabana fused individual images of self with images of each other as a couple, was observed to function as a reference structure for incorporating and interpreting each child's inherent behavioral style.

Images and psychobiological profile. Images of Steve and Marty had emerged over time as each child's particular psychobiological profile reciprocally affected and was affected by Mr. and Mrs. Cabana's imagistic interpretation of their sons' potentialities. Mr. Cabana pointed out this interconnection in their Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 10). Glancing over at his wife, he stated: "O.K., you work the circle. The biggest influence in our life would be the kids. Basically, we're influenced by the kids. Put in on top. (Refers to circles representing Steve and Marty.) And then we are going to build down like a pyramid."

Accordingly, Mr. and Mrs. Cabana had instilled in each of their sons a particular image defining who each one was in the family. These images seemed to act as a behavioral framework, similar in function to family themes, for guiding the resolution of "Iness" and "Weness" within interpersonal subsystems.

Fig. 10. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Cabana.

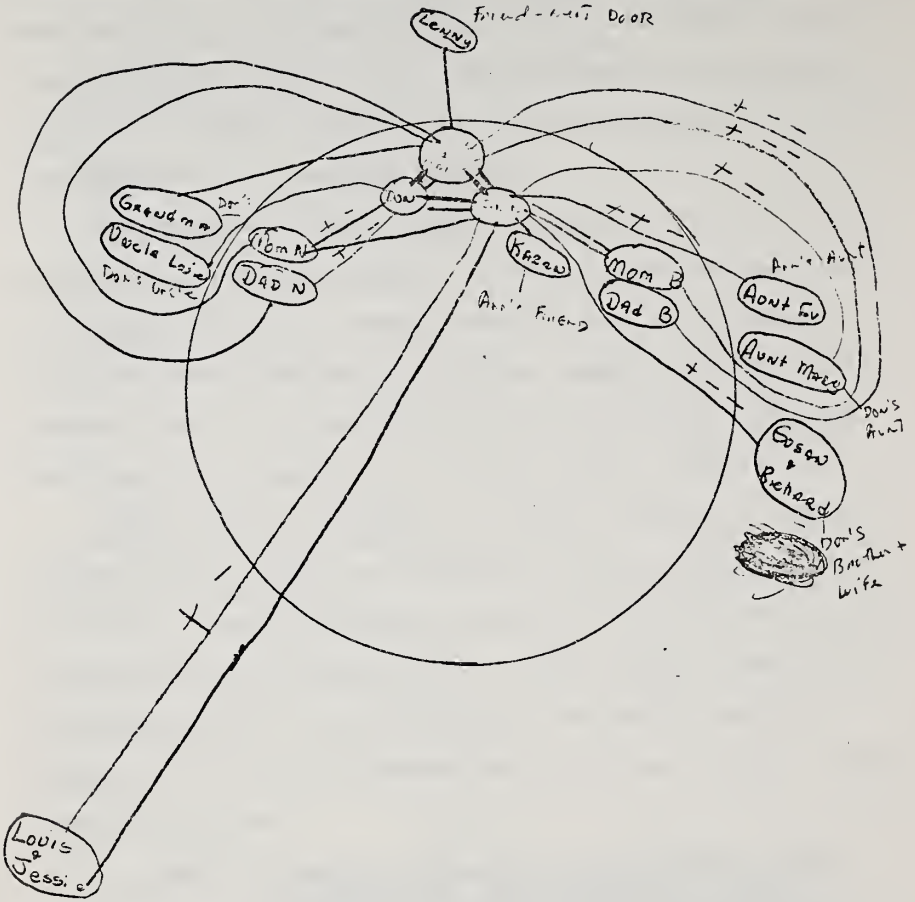

LENNY
Grandma
Uncle Lois
DAD N
KAREN
Mom B
DAD B
AUNT Ev
Aunt Mary
Evan & Richard
Louis & Jessie
+ - - -
+ - - -
+ - -
+ + - -
+ - -
+ -
+ -

Figure 10

Different images for different profiles. From the very beginning of the first interview, Mr. and Mrs. Cabana repeatedly emphasized how Steve and Marty manifested different psychobiological profiles. Mrs. Cabana described Steve as being very bright. She commented: "He has a tremendous memory. Can remember things that happened years ago." Marty was reported to be the exact opposite of Steve. Mr. Cabana remarked: "Marty, he pushes you to the end. He cannot take no for an answer. He's like his uncle Kermit. He has a lot of traits that Kermit has. He's more aggressive. He's not that friendly."

Thus, Steve was viewed as being an intelligent, easy to get along with, and sensitive child. Marty, on the other hand, was imbued with the image of the active, somewhat difficult child, who, although not possessing Steve's intellectual abilities, showed a proclivity towards mechanical skills. The parallel between Steve and Marty Cabana, and Patti and Janice L'Campion was, to say the least, strikingly similar.

Parental reaction to children. Because of their sons' different psychobiological profiles and subsequently different behavioral styles, Mr. and Mrs. Cabana had learned to employ different child rearing strategies when dealing with Steve and Marty. Their images of their sons and the particular manner in which they dealt with each of them, were summed up in the following comments made by Mrs. and Mr. Cabana following a family observation:

> Mrs. C: Steve is a pleasure. He's a pleasure. Steve listens to you. Marty pushes you. I love them easily but Marty has to be handled with very, very... (Pause.) He's a sensitive child; yet you would not know it. He's just a very hard child to live with.
>
> Mr. C: (Interrupts.) He can get on your nerves. I

feel personally that Steve is very sensitive.

Mrs. C: He's extremely sensitive. So am I. But I'm more like Marty. If someone offends me, I will lash out at them. Steve would just cry.

Mr. C: Steve has a good personality. He's just an all round good kid. But Marty, he, I don't know if his age or what, but he can really get on your nerves. He just won't quit.

Mrs. C: He won't take no for an answer.

Enactment of images. Time and space limitations do not permit the presentation of actual episodes depicting Steve and Marty's images as they were enacted in the Cabana family. However, the image of Marty as a difficult and mischievous child was witnessed on numerous occasions. It appeared that Marty lived up to his difficult child image whether he was observed interacting with his brother, his father, his mother or with the entire Cabana family. Steve, on the other hand, lived up to his image as the bright and easy to get along with child. Mr. and Mrs. Cabana's desire to nurture Steve's intellectual potential was observed on numerous occasions. Their efforts appeared to be congruent with the image they held of Steve as being very bright, deep, and sensitive. These images and the manner in which they were validated appeared to be central to understanding the content and meaning of the family system-child relationship in the Cabana family.

Comments

The phrase "my little pepper pot," to a non-family member, would probably appear to be cute and of little significance in understanding Jennifer Waverly's development as it was unfolding inside her family. However, when analyzed within the context of the Waverly family, the

image of Jennifer being a "little pepper pot" had a much deeper meaning. It was as if Jennifer's position and function in her family and her particular behavioral style was in tandem with the image of her resembling a "little pepper pot." Jennifer Waverly often acted like a "little pepper pot."

In each of the families studied, the task of developing and validating images was observed to be central for understanding how families shaped the development of children. Although the intent of this dissertation was to identify and describe family-level variables rather than to evaluate the quality of each family's child rearing environment, a number of observations were made concerning the image validation task.

The Origin of an Image.

The development and maintenance of an image was related, in part, to the child's particular psychobiological profile or temperament and other ancillary experiences that signaled the child out from and/or related the child to other family members (e.g., having an easy birth or a complicated birth, physically or emotionally resembling someone in the family, and/or displaying peculiar behavioral traits). The other essential ingredient contributing to a child's image had to do with adult image development. Adults sometimes were observed interpreting their child's particular psychobiological profile in accordance with images they held of themselves as individuals, as parents, and as a married couple. These various images were used to interpret each child's behavior and, in this sense, contributed to the creation and subsequent validation of an image for the child. Thus, a child's

image not only reflected the child's psychobiological profile but also parental perceptions, or even hopes and dreams as expressed in images, of this profile and subsequent behavioral style.

Take the case of the Fisher family. Since Mr. Fisher had wished that he had been more assertive as a child, Carl's somewhat active and motoric interaction style ("ants in the pants" image) was transformed into an image of Carl that was positive. Carl was looked at as being independent and athletic rather than as being hyperactive and difficult. In another family, such behavior might have been interpreted differently and thus given a different image.

Subsystem Images.

Even though each family member appeared to possess a central, overriding image that summed up his or her personality, different behavioral variations of the central image were observed. These behavioral variations seemed to be a function of the particular relationship in which the child was functioning. For example, Linda DiMaggio's difficult image and corresponding behavior appeared more subdued when Linda interacted at the level of the family unit subsystem than when she was engaged in relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems. When operating at the level of interpersonal subsystem relationships, especially the father-child subsystem, Linda's difficult behavior became intensified. On the other hand, Floyd Builder's "fighter image" and corresponding behavior was observed to become more acute when Floyd was involved with family members at the level of the family unit subsystem. When functioning within the space of dyadic interpersonal subsystems,

Floyd's aggressive behavior, to a certain extent, became less aggressive.

It appeared that when certain family members functioned together within the boundary of a particular subsystem relationship, the images that they carried with them were transformed into what can be termed as a reference structure or theme. This theme functioned as a guide for directing and negotiating subsystem interaction. In all likelihood, subsystem psychosocial profiles somehow grew out of these reference structures.

What to Expect from Family Life.

Besides the personal subsystem images that parents reported they entered marriage with, it often appeared that each member of a couple developed an image of what to expect from family life and what his or her role was in the creation and maintenance of a family. For example, many of the fathers saw their image in terms of how well they provided for their families. For lack of a better term, this image could be called the "breadwinner-provider" image. In a similar fashion, most of the mothers developed images that reflected the expressive, nurturant mothering function in the family. The validation of a father's "breadwinner-provider" image and a mother's "caring-nurturant" image was very important to the daily organization of family life.

Some families also appeared to develop an image of who they were as a family. The evidence to support the development of a family image was, at best, circumstantial and certainly not as prevalent as the evidence to support the existence and importance of family member images. Nevertheless, some evidence was secured to suggest that families did in

fact develop an image of themselves as a living social organism. The extent to which each of the families developed an image of who they were as a family varied. However, there was some evidence although elusive, to support the notion that families held a mental picture of where they came from, where they were now, and where they were going. This mental picture appeared to distinguish family behavior from individual behavior. It was one thing to be Judy as opposed to being Judy Almeida. The family image, as well as could be determined, served to provide family members with a sense of history and meaning. In some cases, this image encompassed three to four generations of family life and was, to some extent, reflected in family themes.

Interrelationship of Family-Level Issues.

A final remark must be made concerning the interrelationship between the resolution of "Iness" and "Weness," the creation of subsystem psychosocial profiles and themes, and the validation of images. As the research progressed and more time was spent with each family, it became apparent that "Iness-Weness" resolution, the development of thematic subsystem patterns, and the validation of images were somehow all interrelated.

It was, however, extremely difficult to determine where one task ended and another began. Since the purpose of this research was merely to identify and describe the types of tasks that emerged when the family system-child relationship rather than parent-child dyads was studied, no systematic attempt has been made to present an in depth analysis of the form and structure and interrelationship of these four identified

family tasks. Such an endeavor would require a more elaborate methodology than the one employed in this study. However, in Chapter IX an attempt has been made to illustrate the interrelationship among these four family-level tasks as they were observed functioning in the Williams and Almeida families.

CHAPTER IX

THE FOUR TASKS AT INTERFACE

The larger the family, the more permutations and combinations in family interaction and relationships are possible. When studying Mr. and Mrs. Almeida and their four children, it appeared, at first glance, that the family environment, due to family size, was more complex and varied than the Williams family. Take for instance the family video session, the baptism of Gina, the newest member to the Almeida family. That Sunday afternoon and evening the tenement was literally filled with relatives and friends. The Almeida children were observed interacting with grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, not to mention the ongoing interaction that occurred between and among immediate family members.

Paradoxically, when viewed more closely, the Almeida family, like the Williams family, was confronted with and attempted to resolve issues that were generic to all the families studied. Almeida family interaction, regardless of the particular subsystem involved, centered around the task of developing and validating family member images via the resolution of "Iness" and "Weness" at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem.

Although the context of family life varied across the 12 families investigated, the tasks involved in creating and sustaining family life appeared to remain constant. As depicted in the Williams and Almeida families, family members attempted to establish a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness" through the task of developing and validating images at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family

unit subsystem.

The Williams Family

The central, most important theme that ran through the Williams family was family members' negotiation of "Iness" and "Weness" images. Whether functioning at the level of either interpersonal subsystems or the family unit subsystem, family members attempted to resolve being an individual while simultaneously maintaining membership in the Williams family. This "Iness-Weness" theme functioned as a reference structure and, as such, was observed to influence the structure and function of the family system-child relationship. The origins of this theme were found in the personal subsystem images that Mr. and Mrs. Williams developed in childhood and brought with them to marriage. Through marriage and the formation of a family, Mr. and Mrs. Williams' respective personal subsystem images were transformed into a conjoint family theme. They transformed their respective images of themselves as individuals, as parents, and as a couple into a shared imagistic theme of "Iness" versus "Weness."

Mrs. Williams.

Mrs. Williams entered married life with the hope of becoming an affectionate and caring wife and mother. Her image of herself originated in her childhood family. Mrs. Williams' father was very strict, more so with her than with her older brother with whom her father was somewhat more lenient. Her mother worked while raising a family and, according to Mrs. Williams, performed the "peace maker" function in

the family. With both parents employed full-time, Mrs. Williams experienced independence at a young age, devising interpersonal strategies to enable her to function without constant parental supervision.

Mrs. Williams recalled that she experienced a normal childhood. The two conditions, however, that she wished were different were her mother's absence from the home and her father's austere personality. Her father had a congenital heart problem and because of this family members were required to keep their emotions in check so as not to upset their father. Holding back emotionally, Mrs. Williams felt, created an atmosphere of tension. She remarked: "My mother and father kept things from each other and the kids." As a result, Mrs. Williams was somewhat resentful that her mother, because she worked, was not always available to her. Mrs. Williams often had to rely on herself or her brother for emotional support.

The effect of her father's stern and critical style on Mrs. Williams was vividly depicted during an evening meal when Mrs. Williams served apple pie for dessert.

Mrs. W: (Serves the apple pie.) This is cooked.
Mr. W: (Laughs to himself but loud enough to be heard.)
Mrs. W: Now, that was a dirty laugh.
Mr. W: I'm just thinking. (Smiles.)
Mrs. W: If my father was here, that wouldn't be cooked.
Mr. W: If those apples were crunchy, you were goin' to take one hell of a beaten!
Mrs. W: That's all I could think of when he said that. If these apples, my father... (Pause.) I could cook a pie to death and he'd say they weren't cooked. (Looks over at her mother.) That's why you started to use can pie filling.

Mrs. Williams' image. Mrs. Williams' image of being an affectionate and competent mother was a constant imagistic theme observed throughout the study. Mrs. Williams also held the image, as part of her mother image, of being honest about emotional feelings. She perceived her "mothering" function as a full-time job. Being accessible and responsive to her children's needs was central to her image of herself as a person. Regardless of the subject matter, no matter how sensitive it might be, Mrs. Williams felt that it was her obligation to tell Kathy the truth and to make herself available at all times. In an attempt to validate her "responsive mother" image, Mrs. Williams was observed, on numerous occasions, responding to Kathy's inquisitive style, challenging and correcting her daughter when appropriate.

Enactment of this mother image. Mrs. Williams' responsive and nurturant image was depicted in the following episode. In this episode, the instructive interactional style of the mother-child subsystem was also illustrated.

Kathy: (Sits at the kitchen table drawing letters on a picture she has drawn.)
Mrs. W: (Walks over to the kitchen table.) How are you going to decide what letters you're going to put there?
Kathy: Because you just keep correcting them like that.
Mrs. W: You like L's and O's? There's and L and an O in every single word. You notice that? (Points out with her finger the L's and O's.)
Kathy: I only put Kathy on that one. (Refers to another drawing she has brought home from playschool.)
Mrs. W: Why?
Kathy: 'Cause.
Mrs. W: (Points with her finger.) What's that word?
Kathy: (Looks confused.)
Mrs. W: When I said why, what did you say?
Kathy: Because I wanted to.

Mrs. W: No, you didn't say because.
Kathy: What did I say?
Mrs. W: (Bends over to eye level with Kathy.) 'Cause!
Kathy: (Assertively.) Because I wanted to!
Mrs. W: Because, not 'cause. Because. (Smiles at Kathy.) Thank you very much, my little angel.
Kathy: You're welcome.

Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams' childhood was centered around family life; everything revolved around the home. As was customary for many European immigrants, his parents believed firmly that family loyalty was something that was passed on through family genes. Mr. Williams was the only boy in his family, having one older sister, and, as was typical in many first generation Western European families, he was the center of his mother's attention. Mr. Williams recalled how his mother constantly waited on him. He reminisced: "I had an Italian mother. She was home all day. I was waited on hand and foot. I didn't do much for myself." Comparing her husband's childhood to her own, Mrs. Williams added: "Neither one of the children did much."

Whereas Mr. Williams' mother stayed home to care for her two children, his relationship with his father was, like his wife's relationship with her father, somewhat distant. As was typical of many immigrant working-class men, his father spent a great deal of time at his place of employment. Another factor contributing to Mr. Williams' somewhat strained relationship with his father was his father's age. His father was 44 when Mr. Williams was born.

Although Mr. Williams was conscious of the importance of spending

qualitative time with his children, he seemed to have emerged from childhood with an image of himself that reflected a theme embedded in his family of origin. He saw himself as an emotionally warm person, similar to his mother, and, yet, he spent an inordinate amount of time working two jobs in order to confirm his "breadwinner-provider" image. Mr. Williams' pursuit of this "breadwinner-provider" image was somewhat congruent with the image his father held of himself and the particular role his father performed in the family.

Enactment of the "warm-provider" image. When Mr. Williams was home he enjoyed playing with his daughter Kathy. However, whereas the mother-daughter subsystem psychosocial profile was characteristically instructive and educationally challenging, the father-daughter subsystem was characterized by a playful psychosocial profile.

For reasons that were not entirely clear from the data collected, when Mr. Williams was involved in the "Weness" of the father-daughter subsystem, he displayed a somewhat playful interactional style. This playful style might have had its origins in the fact that Mr. Williams' relationship with his father was confined to accompanying his father when his father went to work and from the fact that he perceived his mother as a warm, nurturant figure. This style might also have resulted from the fact that since Mr. Williams saw himself as the "hardworking-provider," when he was home with his children he used this time to relax and unwind, to experience the "warm side" of his "hardworking-provider" image. As reflected in the following episode, it appeared that Mr. Williams and Kathy's images of "Iness" merged to form a father-daughter subsystem "Weness" image that somehow translated

itself into an observable, playful psychosocial profile.

Mr. W: (Sits at the kitchen table with Kathy.) How about the pennies I give you every night from my pocket?
Kathy: (Runs into her room and comes back with a small pocket book full of pennies.) I'm telling you. (Runs back into bedroom and comes out all excited.) I have two purses full of money.
Mr. W: (Goes through her purse, takes out a piece of paper.)
Kathy: That's my bill, you gave it to me dad.
Mr. W: I know. (Continues his search.)
Kathy: What are you looking for. I folded it up and I'm leaving it in there. (Watches intently as her father examines the contents of Kathy's purse.)
Mr. W: (Hands the purse back to Kathy. Reaches into his pocket.) Here you go. (Hands Kathy some pennies.)
Kathy: (Puts pennies into her purse.) There in here.
Mr. W: Looks good! You're going to have to make a trip to the bank pretty soon. (Smiles.)
Kathy: Why?
Mr. W: You're building up fast!
Kathy: Who? Kathy?
Mr. W: No, the pennies. (Picks up purse as if weighing it.) Feels like a garbage bag. (Laughs.)
Kathy: Leave it alone!
Mr. W: (Takes back the pennies he gave Kathy.) You have too much stuff in that pocket book.
Kathy: No, no. Not too much. (Shakes her head "no".)
Mr. W: Are you going to be able to pick it up?
Kathy: Yes. Watch. (Picks up her pocket book.)
Mr. W: (Jokingly.) Oh, I think it smells like a garbage bag.
Kathy: Leave it alone, come on. (Grabs her purse.)
Mr. W: Uh, there's my pennies. (Looks at three pennies that have fallen out of the purse.)
Kathy: No! N-O-O! Mine! You save them for me. GIVE THEM TO ME!
Mr. W: (Smiles.) I didn't take them.
Kathy: Yes!
Mr. W: The other one fell on the floor. No, on the chair.
Kathy: Nope. (Looks on the floor and then on the chair.)

Mr. W: (Picks up penny from the chair.) There it is, on the chair.
Kathy: Give it to me. Not your pennies, they're mine!
Mr. W: What, they got a hole in it. (Refers to the purse.)
Kathy: NO!
Mr. W: (Examines the purse.) Let me see.
Kathy: (Watches her father examine her purse.) Don't have a hole in it.
Mr. W: Where do you put the pennies? Let me see. (Checks inside purse.)
Kathy: In the pocket. (Points to a small pocket inside purse.)
Mr. W: Oh! How come it's upside down?
Kathy: Because.
Mr. W: It doesn't make any sense, Kathy.
Kathy: (Jumps up and down in her chair.)
Mr. W: Calm down. (Pause.) Would I go into your pocket book without asking you?
Kathy: Yes, you would, daddy!
Mr. W: (Searches through the purse.) What else do you have in this garbage bag?
Kathy: No! It's not a garbage bag; it's a pocket book!
Mr. W: Oh, a pocket book. (Smiles at Kathy.)

Kathy's Image.

According to her parents, Kathy had been an easy child to care for. As an infant she quickly developed regular eating, elimination, and sleeping patterns. However, Kathy's image did not appear to develop as a result of her particular psychobiological profile, although her pleasant disposition and somewhat mature behavior no doubt contributed to her image development and the manner in which her parents interacted with her. Rather, Kathy's skill at providing commentary on family life, along with her somewhat intelligent and mature mannerisms, converged to develop an image of Kathy as the family bystander. This image of Kathy as an intelligent, somewhat "spoiled" child who had been encouraged to tell the truth and to express what she felt, appeared to be transformed

into a behavioral style that was seen as fulfilling the bystander function in the Williams family. In an effort to mediate her and her parents' resolution of separateness and connectedness, Kathy, in all her verbal precociousness, provided commentary on family life. Her verbal interventions often functioned as a distance regulation mechanism for monitoring family conflicts and potential conflicts involving the "Iness-Weness" resolution task. Her maternal grandmother summed up Kathy's bystander image with the comment: "She has an answer for everything."

Enactment of Kathy's bystander image. Kathy's bystander image, an image similar to her maternal grandmother's "peace-keeping" image, was depicted during a family observation session that took place during the evening meal.

During dinner Mrs. Williams confronted her husband on the issue of remodeling the attic into two children's bedrooms. She had hoped to have this project completed before the expected arrival of their new child. Mr. Williams, as was usual, had been busy with outside projects and, as a result, hadn't given much thought to his project.

Mr. W: There's no way that room is goin' to be done.
Mrs. W: It better be done! (Becomes upset.)
Mr. W: There's no way that that room is goin' to be done.
Mrs. W: Why? You have six weeks.
Mr. W: (Tries to divert his wife's anger with humor.) Ah, I don't know. That's an awful tall order.
Kathy: Daddy! Daddy! You're definitely going to do it for me and the baby.
Mr. W: (Holds up his two hands.) I only have two hands. (Pause.) Have to fix the side of the house. (Looks over at Kathy.) Can't shut her up.

Kathy: Can't shut daddy up either.
Mrs. W: (Laughs.)
Grandmother: (Laughs.)
Mr. W: That is enough from the peanut gallery.
Kathy: Shut up!
Mrs. W: (Senses that Kathy has pushed too far.) Hey!

Attempting to Resolve "Iness" and "Weness".

Mrs. and Mrs. Williams shared the belief that family life was the most important experience in their lives and in the lives of their children. Accordingly, they held images of themselves that affirmed the shared experience that living in a family and rearing children entailed. They saw themselves as responsible and caring parents. However, Mr. Williams' personal subsystem image of being a competent provider, the "breadwinner-provider" image, sometimes conflicted, was incongrous, with Mrs. Williams' desire to have her husband home more often. Although she stated that she enjoyed being a full-time mother and homemaker, Mrs. Williams' openly admitted, keeping in tune with her image of expressing her feelings, that staying home and caring for her two young children was very physically as well as emotionally demanding. More crucial to the confirmation of her "responsive-mother" image was the feedback she received, or in her case did not receive, from her husband.

Although realizing that her husband worked long hours partly to fulfill his "provider" image and partly to fulfill his need for individuation, Mrs. Williams perceived her husband's time away from the family as a lack of support for her. Over time, Mrs. Williams' "Iness" image had become overwhelmed by the sense of "Weness" she received from being embedded in the mother-children subsystem.

As depicted on numerous occasions and in the following episode, Mrs. Williams felt that her sense of being an individual, her image of herself as a person apart from her image of being a competent and responsive housewife, was enmeshed in and subsumed by the "Weness" of the family system-child relationship. However, like Mr. L'Campion and most of the fathers in the families studied, Mr. Williams was able to externalize and thus validate his images of "Iness" and "Weness." Through his employment and his periodic involvement with his son and daughter, Mr. Williams asserted his individuality while concurrently enjoying the shared "Weness" that came from family life. The following episode occurred during the Family Life Space Drawing session. While reflecting on their conjoint drawing, Mrs. and Mr. Williams became engaged in the following conversation.

Mr. W: You get love, companionship, nagging about unfinished construction. (Laughs.) Ah, get your meals cooked and your laundry done.
Mrs. W: (Laughs.) You also get your nose broken.
Mr. W: (More serious.) A sense of belonging. (Looks at his wife.) You want to get married again?
Mrs. W: I don't think so.
Mr. W: (Interrupts.) Woof!
Mrs. W: This is what I don't know. I really don't know how I feel about it. I've had...
Mr. W: (Interrupts.) Would you like to get married again?
Mrs. W: Someone to cook his meals, clean his clothes. (Laughs.) Clean his house. (Pause.) It all sounds very good, you know. But I don't really know how I'd feel being put in that situation. (Pause.) I don't think I would get married again.
Mr. W: You can't get cohesiveness, dependency anywhere else.
Mrs. W: I don't think either of us really looked for it anywhere else. But it wouldn't be the same.
Mr. W: I think you get love from the family. I think

you can get cohesiveness from friends, but I don't think you can get them both together. (Phone rings and he answers it.)

Mrs. W: (Continues.) I don't really know. I don't know how it works. (Pause.) It's not that I don't know why; it obviously means something to me because we have both worked at it very hard. We've had enough situations within our lives even though we have only been married for eight years. Where either one of us could have just gotten up and said, 'The hell with this. I don't need it; it doesn't mean anything.' I don't know why I did it; I did it. (Pause.) But, we had the opportunities to scrap it all but we didn't. We had the opportunity where we were this close to a family and it didn't work. (Refers to the miscarriage with the first pregnancy.) Yet, we tried again. So it meant, it means something to us somewhere. Whether it's a fulfillment, whether it's personal pride, I don't know what it is. But it has definitely meant something. (Looks, over to her husband who is still on the phone with a business associate.) And believe me, there've been days this past week when I've--could've said, 'Why am I doing it? I must be nuts having another child. She's sick; she's whiny; he's not doing things the way I want them done.' And. (Pause.) But I guess, when you look at it, it's really you know...(Pause.) I won't live or die one way or another without it.

As exemplified in the above and other observed family episodes, Mrs. Williams experienced some difficulty resolving the "Iness-Weness" task. Being a full-time mother who was responsive to her children's needs, although validating her "responsive" mother image that in turn had its origins in her own childhood, had interferred with Mrs. Williams' development and validation of her own individuality outside of motherhood. It appeared that the responsibilities of caring for an infant and a preschooler coupled with the inordinate amount of time that her husband spent away from his family, had inculcated in Mrs. Williams a sense

of being too connected to her children. She felt as if her sense of "Iness" was enmeshed in family "Weness." Too much time within the mother-children subsystem, without being able to retreat into the protective boundary of the spouse-spouse subsystem, appeared to be contributing to Mrs. Williams' feeling of aloneness.

And to complicate matters, Mrs. Williams still had not resolved her feelings towards her childhood family. She had not yet developed a sense of individuation apart from the "Weness" of her parents. As depicted in the Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 11), Mrs. Williams still felt strongly connected to her mother and to her father, even though her father had died two years ago. Her connectedness to her childhood family and to her present family was making it difficult for Mrs. Williams to establish a sense of "Iness" within the "Weness" of family life.

Kathy's Resolution of "Iness" and "Weness".

Learning how to be alone and to come together, of being an "I" within family "Weness," was a thematic dilemma in the Williams family. Whereas Mr. and Mrs. Williams openly admitted to this conflict, Kathy Williams, in her typical bystander fashion, was observed to externalize her feelings of "Iness" through the safe medium of play.

Enactment of "Iness-Weness" resolution. Kathy's negotiation of separateness and connectedness was observed during one mother-child observation. In this episode, Kathy attempted to secure some private space without entirely separating herself from the "Weness" of the mother-child subsytem.

Fig. 11. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Williams.

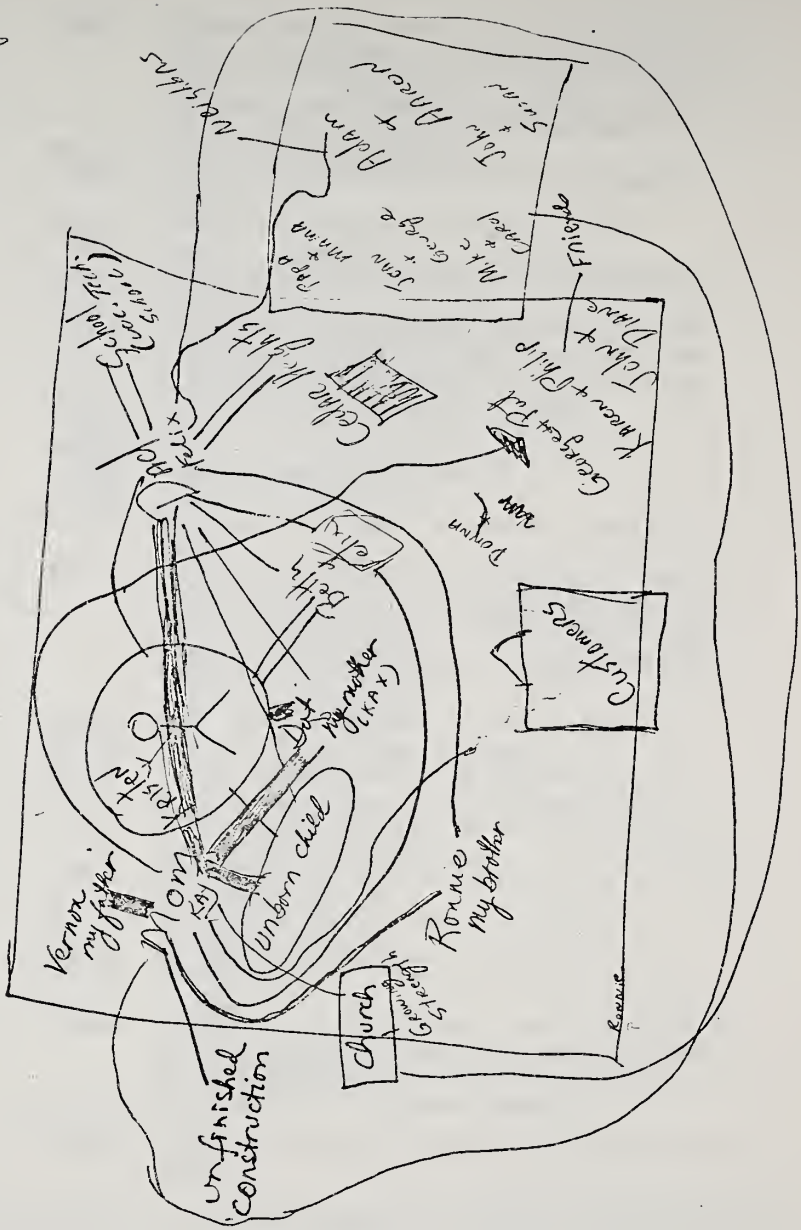

Great Bram
Nicholas
Adam + Andrew
Mike + Gene + Carol
Tom + Jonathan
Tap a Jonathan
Tobin + Andrew
Fridge
Cedar Heights
Church
Cleveland Heights
Tobin + Phillip
Cleveland Ave
Down
Bath
Dad
my mother (Kay)
Customers
Kay
Mom
Vernon my brother
Ronnie my brother
Unfinished construction
Unborn child

Figure 11

Kathy: (Appears from her room.) I'm closing my door. (Closes the bedroom door and then opens it.) Mommy, I'm closing the door because I'm doing my homework and there's too much noise what you're doing. (Closes the bedroom door.)
Mrs. W: (Looks somewhat confused.)
Kathy: (Comes out of her bedroom to get a piece of paper.)
Mrs. W: Would you like some construction paper?
Kathy: (Nods... "yes".)
Mrs. W: (Gives Kathy three pieces of colored construction paper.)
Kathy: (Takes the paper and goes back into her room, closing the door behind her. Then opens the door and sticks her head out.) What a liar!
Mrs. W: (Looks somewhat confused.) What?
Kathy: What a liar you are. You're a liar.
Mrs. W: Why?
Kathy: (Mumbles something to herself.)
Mrs. W: I'm talking to you!
Kathy: You told daddy that I was going to school tomorrow.
Mrs. W: (Drops her dishcloth and walks over to Kathy's bedroom doorway.) I told daddy that you were going to school today. I told daddy that he couldn't have the brake on the car fixed today because I had to take you to school. (Pause.) Don't call me a liar.
Kathy: O.K. (Closes the door to her bedroom.)
Mrs. W: (Resumes cleaning the kitchen.)
Kathy: (Plays in her bedroom. Sticks her head out a few moments later.) Lock my door!
Mrs. W: (Not understanding what Kathy is saying comes over to bedroom doorway.)
Kathy: (Having no lock on the door, pretends to lock the bedroom door.)
Mrs. W: Why are you making believe locking it?
Kathy: So nobody can get in.
Mrs. W: Nobody's goin' to come in without knocking first.
Kathy: (Glances up at her mother.) Well, if they knock my door, when daddy comes home and if I'm still doing my homework tell him not to knock on my door because I'm doing my homework.
Mrs. W: O.K.
Kathy: (Closes the door to her bedroom and resumes her play.)

As depicted in the above episode, Mrs. Williams, although herself

feeling the need to experience her own individuality, was able to respect and even encourage Kathy's expression of "Iness." After viewing herself in the family videotape, Mrs. Williams commented on her role in facilitating Kathy's resolution of separateness and connectedness. She stated:

> Kathy I feel is my friend. But she also knows that she's my daughter and that there are certain things that she doesn't do with me. Like get real pushy. We can have fun, but when I stop she knows how to stop. We're into a big thing now about privacy. She almost demands her own, but doesn't like to respect other people's. It's another learning process for her. If she wants it, she'll have to respect it. She has to give it to other people.

A Final Note.

As illustrated in comments and family life episodes, the most pressing concern confronting the Williams family was the parental subsystem's resolution of "Iness" and "Weness" images at the levels of interpersonal and family unit subsystems. Arriving at a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness" via image development and validation appeared to give rise to family themes. As was witnessed in the preceding illustrations, this theme grew out of the personal subsystem images that Mrs. and Mr. Williams held of themselves as individuals in their own childhood families, as parents, and as a married couple.

At this stage in the Williams' family life cycle, the primary theme could best be described as the struggle in the marital subsystem at achieving a comfortable balance between "Iness" and "Weness." Other themes might certainly have been operating and might have been uncovered if more projective instruments had been employed. However, it seemed

that primary family themes could only have emerged and have been identified once the Williams family had come to a more definitive resolution of "Iness" and "Weness." Mr. Williams was still trying to separate himself from his father while Mrs. Williams was attempting to separate herself from her childhood family.

It was as if both the Williams' childhood families and the images of "Iness" and "Weness" developed in these families were now pulling them away from their present family and from each other. For Mrs. Williams the stress was more intense than it was for her husband. She appeared caught in the middle of two family system-child relationships: Her left hand was holding on to the "Weness" of her childhood family system-child relationship while her right hand was holding on to the "Weness" of her adulthood family. As a result, achieving a sense of individuation was being delayed for Mrs. Williams.

Only after Mr. and Mrs. Williams are able to more comfortably resolve the "Iness-Weness" task and develop and validate more positive "Iness" images, especially in the case of Mrs. Williams, will family members be able to develop a more definitive sense of "Iness" within the "Weness" of interpersonal and family unit subsystem relationships. When concrete steps have been taken to resolve these two tasks, then more productive and concrete family themes will possibly emerge to the point of being more readily identified.

More importantly, the manner in which Mr. and Mrs. Williams decide to resolve these two tasks, especially the "Iness-Weness" task, most likely will determine, in part, the psychosocial organization of the family system-child relationship. When viewed at the level of the

family system-child relationship, resolving these tasks, or in the case of the Williams family the lack of resolving these tasks, was observed to be the most important environmental factor influencing the lives of Kathy and Billy Williams.

The Almeida Family

Separateness and connectedness in the Almeida family appeared to be resolving itself via the enactment of family themes and the validation of family member images. From the data collected, it appeared, as was exemplified in the Williams family, that the Almeida family system theme emanated from the development and validation of images. Although it was difficult to determine what came first, images or themes, it seemed that the validation and subsequent synthesis of personal subsystem images (images of children and adults) resulted in the establishment of family themes.

In the Almeida family, the paternal personal subsystem image of "hard on the outside, soft on the inside" and "one's word is binding" and the maternal personal subsystem image of "caring but sometimes taken advantage of" merged, in the form of a "Weness" image, to create a central Almeida family theme. This theme was best summarized as follows: Family members were allowed to express their particular psychobiological profiles as long as each individual did not show disrespect for the rights of others. Accordingly, each Almeida family member was allowed to enact his or her particular image in the family as long as the expression of this image did not interfere with the validation of other family member images.

Mr. Almeida.

Mr. and Mrs. Almeida emerged from childhood with different personal subsystem imagery which, in turn, they had brought with them into marriage. Mr. Almeida perceived himself to be a person who, through hard work, was able to provide for his family. Like his deceased father, whom Mr. Almeida admitted that he strongly identified with, Mr. Almeida's image of himself was closely associated with his ability to perform the instrumental, "provider" function in his family. As he stated, "If you don't give to your kids, who're you going to give to?"

In the family interview, Mr. Almeida summed up his feelings towards work. He remarked: "As long as you have two hands, you have the ability to make money. I've worked since I was 12 years old. I went every Sunday with my father. My father was never the type to play. He worked, that was it."

Putting in an honest day's work, working hard to achieve, reflected Mr. Almeida's critical image of a person whose word was binding. To quote Mr. Almeida: "If I tell you something, I'll do it. I'll do it. I'm not going to say that I'll do it and then be a two-face." Thus, it appeared that underlying what on the surface seemed to be a somewhat authoritarian and inflexible person there existed a soft center that valued honesty and one's word as truth.

Enactment of Mr. Almeida's image. In Mr. Almeida's family of origin, food was a symbol for caring. His father always insisted on having the refrigerator full of food and required that all family members be present during the evening meal. Subsequently, the Almeidas owned a large double-door refrigerator which was always well stocked with a variety of

foods. Mr. Almeida also valued the evening meal, viewing dinner as a time for being with his family. The evening meal usually lasted for at least an hour and it was not uncommon for Mrs. Almeida to prepare a three-course meal complete with homemade dessert. Besides making sure that his family ate well, Mr. Almeida was observed to be, as his wife remarked, a pushover for his children. Mrs. Almeida summed her husband up as having "a big bark and a little bite."

The hard exterior side of Mr. Almeida's image stemmed from his emphasis upon the work ethic. As he remarked to his wife one evening, "Connie, you get out of a relationship what you put into it. It's like anything else. You get out of it what you put into it." Mr. Almeida's image that hard work led to achievement was reflected in the expectations he held for his children. Mr. Almeida strongly felt that if his children expected him to finance their college education, then they had to achieve academically.

Mrs. Almeida.

Mrs. Almeida complemented her husband's instrumental image by performing the expressive, "homemaker" function inside the family. Mr. Almeida periodically kidded his wife about being too trusting and a pushover. At the same time, he valued his wife's nurturant style. Employing this expressive, "good woman" image as a behavior guide, Mrs. Almeida pursued and expressed satisfaction in her child rearing and homemaker responsibilities. Caring for her family's welfare appeared, for the most part, to validate Mrs. Almeida's image of herself as a caring mother and as a trusting and good person.

Mrs. Almeida's image seemed to originate from her identification with her own mother. Mrs. Almeida recalled that her mother, because she was divorced from her husband when her two children were both very young, had to work full-time in order to provide for her family. Her mother was able to work full-time and still found enough energy to care for her children. This left an impression upon Mrs. Almeida.

Mrs. Almeida was so impressed with how demanding life was for her own mother that she felt fortunate to be able to devote all of her time caring for her children. Although she intended to seek some type of employment once her children no longer required her full attention, Mrs. Almeida did not seem to resent staying home to care for her family. In fact, she was observed to thoroughly enjoy being a full-time mother and wife. Even though at times the responsibilities associated with being a full-time mother of four young children demanded most of her attention, Mrs. Almeida was able to find a sense of enjoyment in her daily child rearing routine.

Following the Family Life Space Drawing session, Mrs. Almeida expressed her feelings towards motherhood: "The work is tiresome; the work is rough. I'm always on the go. I never have time for myself. I wouldn't change it."

Validation of the mother image. If Mrs. Almeida's image of herself as a "trusting person" and a "caring mother" were not supported by her family, then she, like Mrs. Williams and so many mothers of young children, might have become frustrated and felt that her sense of "Iness" was embedded in and received meaning solely from family "Weness." This had not happened in the Almeida family as it had in the Williams family.

It seemed that whenever Mrs. Almeida experienced doubts about being a full-time mother, someone was there to provide testimony to her importance, thus validating her caring mother image.

The validation of Mrs. Almeida's image was witnessed during one of the family observations. Mrs. Almeida had become pregnant during the winter and towards the end of summer she was beginning to succumb to both the heat and the demands of her children. When the children were preparing to begin school, Anthony, noticing that autumn was fast approaching, reminded his mother of the warm memory he held of her baking apple pies. Mrs. Almeida fondly recalled her son's remarks: "Anthony said to me, 'Ma, you know that tree in the yard? When it starts to turning colors every year, you make apple pie. What happened to the apple pies this year?'" With that confirmation of her caring, expressive image via Anthony's image and appreciation of his mother baking apple pies, Mrs. Almeida immediately took a ride with her family into the country to an apple orchard, purchased baking apples, and the following weekend, even though still experiencing pregnancy discomfort, she baked apple pies.

Images of Children.

Each of the four Almeida children were imbued with a personal subsystem image that reflected, to some degree, his or her particular psychobiological profile. When asked to describe each of their children during the family interview, Mrs. and Mr. Almeida engaged in the following conversation.

Mr. A: O.K., Anthony.
Mrs. A: I knew you were going to start with Anthony. (Laughs.)
Mr. A: Anthony reminds me of me when I was younger.

Don't care for nothing. (Pause.) But I tell ya', he's the most affectionate, but he'll think nothing of go punching a guy, a kid 12 years old in the face down the street. Dominic, Dominic's reserved.

Mrs. A: (Interrupts.) He's his brother. My two kids, two boys are the two brothers. Exactly. Anthony, him. Anthony is like his father. Rough, outgoing, but warm. Dom is warm, more reserved like Uncle Roy.

Mr. A: Judy, she's a brown noser. A politician.

Mrs. A: If she wants something she'll say "That sweater you've got on really's cute." She knows what to say at the right time. (Glances over at her husband.) She has her father tied around her little finger.

Mr. A: We were just talking about Gina the other day.

Mrs. A: Special. That's the one word.

Mr. A: Gina. (Pause.) It's like starting all over again.

Mrs. A: (Comments on having another child.) We probably enjoy it even more, and more. Because the kids share it with us. Kids say "Can I talk with Gina?"

Mr. A: To me, it's like starting all over again.

Mrs. A: We didn't have time to enjoy Anthony and Judy. They were too close together.

Later on in the study, following a family observation, Mrs. and Mr. Almeida again talked about each of their children, how they were different and how they were alike. They commented on how Gina was indeed special, the major reason being not so much her particular psychobiological profile but rather the timing of her birth in the Almeida family. Mrs. Almeida stated how Gina was special because, to quote her, "We're sharing her not just with ourselves, but with the joy they (referring to her children) have with her."

Mrs. Almeida went on to assert that Judy knows how to get what she needs. "Judy is the actress," she remarked. As for Anthony, Mrs. Almeida described him as a "fighter." She related the story of how the other day

Anthony came home and said: "I just kicked a butt." When asked why he beat someone up, Anthony explained how the boy was bothering his sister. Dominic, Mrs. and Mrs. Almeida agreed, was the opposite of his brother Anthony. He was not that aggressive and tended to shy away from fights. Mr. Almeida was somewhat concerned that Dominic, to use his words, "might get stepped on." Mr. Almeida supported his wife's image of Gina as being special. In fact, Mr. Almeida saw the future of his family in Gina's birth. As he held his daughter in his arms one evening, he stated: "She brings us all together."

Thus, all the Almeida children had been imbued with images that reflected the interactive effects of each child's particular psychobiological profile and/or particular function in the Almeida family.

Enactment of sibling images. In the Almeida family, Dominic held the image of being reserved and gentle, like his Uncle Roy. Anthony, like his father, was pictured as being tough on the outside but warm on the inside. Judy was seen as a charmer but also as a subtle manipulator. Gina, being new to the family, was depicted as possessing the potential for breathing new life into the Almeida family.

In the following episode, Anthony's "fighter image" and Judy's "manipulator" image were observed.

It was 8:15 in the morning. Mrs. Almeida was in the bedroom caring for Gina while Judy and Anthony, still dressed in their pajamas, were seated at the kitchen table. Judy was playing with a deck of cards and Anthony was arranging artificial flowers in a small wicker basket.

Judy: (Picks up one of the flowers that Anthony is arranging in the basket.)
Anthony: (Reaches over and hits Judy.)

Judy: (Begins to cry and then runs into the bedroom where her mother is changing Gina.)
Mrs. A: (In a calm voice, calls from the bedroom.) Don't hit her. Come over here Judy.
Anthony: (Continues to arrange the flowers in the basket.) Ha, ha! Judy got hurt.
Judy: (Walks out from the bedroom into the kitchen and then walks into Anthony's bedroom and lies down on Anthony's bed.)
Anthony: (Gets up from the kitchen table and goes into his bedroom and hits Judy again.)
Judy: (Laughs.)
Anthony: (Runs back into the kitchen and sits down at the kitchen table and resumes arranging flowers in the basket.)

In addition to depicting Anthony and Judy's images in the family, the above episode also illustrated how a family theme, even at the level of interpersonal subsystems, influenced the family system-child relationship in the Almeida family. As previously reported, one primary theme was that each family member was permitted to enact his or her personal subsystem image as long as the rights of others were not intruded upon. This theme took on slightly different translations depending upon the particular subsystem in which the children were functioning. When with their mother, as in the above episode, the Almeida children were afforded a little more freedom to experiment with their particular images and the psychobiological profiles these images represented. Although Mr. Almeida also allowed his children a certain amount of freedom to enact their respective images, he was somewhat more authoritative than his wife, especially with Anthony and to a lesser extent Judy. In this sense, the interactive effects of images, subsystem profiles, and themes could be seen operating in the Almeida family system-child relationship.

Resolution of "Iness" and "Weness".

Unlike Mrs. and Mr. Williams, Mrs. and Mr. Almeida were observed to be content with their present resolution of "Iness" and "Weness" images. This resolution of separateness and connectedness stemmed, in part, from their ability to validate family member images. Mrs. Almeida's image of the caring mother was validated by her family's appreciation of her efforts to provide a good life for her family. As illustrated in their Family Life Space Drawing (Figure 12), Mrs. Almeida perceived her husband's presence in the family as support for her expressive, mothering function. Mr. Almeida was observed to spend all of his free time at home with his family. His presence indicated to Mrs. Almeida that he supported her homemaker efforts. As she remarked one evening, "There are times I have to throw him out."

Just as Mrs. Almeida received confirmation of her image, Mr. Almeida's "hard on the outside, soft on the inside" image was validated through the testimony provided to him by family members, especially his wife. For example, one evening while she prepared a bedtime snack for her children, Mrs. Almeida looked over at her husband, who was seated at the kitchen table holding Gina in his arms, and stated affectionately: "He's all bark, all bark. But he's the softest, the kindest, he's a real softy. He'll give his mother a hard time but he's a softy. I like gentleness, kindness."

As witnessed in numerous observations, the Almeida children were observed to experiment with and to express their emerging sense of individuation without excessive parental restrictions. Although placing certain limitations upon their children's behavior, Mr. and Mrs. Almeida

Fig. 12. The Symbolic Drawing of the Family Life Space as drawn by Mr. and Mrs. Almeida.

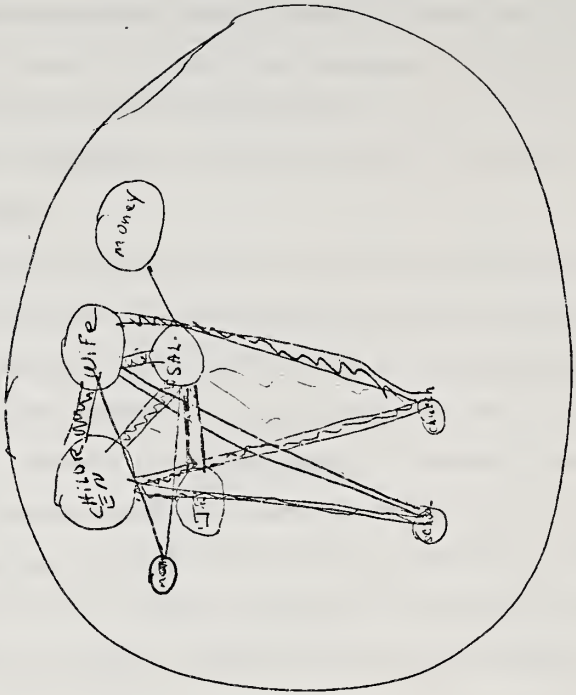


Figure 12

did not overly concern themselves with their children's physical manipulation of the house, allowing them the freedom to make use of the tenement's limited play space. Although the children were not allowed to abuse the furnishings, Mrs. and Mr. Almeida encouraged their children to actively assert their particular psychobiological profiles, even if such exploration became somewhat noisy and aggressive. Within the psychosocial space of interpersonal subsystems, the Almeida children were, for the most part, observed to feel free to move in and out of interpersonal subsystems, an option that seemed to meet each child's developmental needs.

To a certain degree, each of the Almeida children's behavior, as witnessed during numerous observations, reflected personal subsystem imagery. Anthony, the "soft hearted fighter", constantly engaged his sister and older brother in various types of aggressive play. Judy, although at times an involuntary target for Anthony's verbal intimidations and physical assaults, often enticed Anthony into such confrontations. She was also observed to subtlely manipulate situations to satisfy personal needs. Dominic was observed to be more passive and reserved. When compared to Anthony, Dominic was observed to exhibit more self control.

Comments

In the previous chapters, bits and pieces of this family movie have been shown. Some photographic representations of what life was like for the young child in each family has been presented. For purposes of illustration, it was necessary to present separately each of the identified

family tasks. Although useful for identifying and clarifying the four family tasks, such a presentation gave a somewhat distorted scenario of the family system-child relationships studied.

Family life, like a movie or a journey, cannot be accurately captured through still photographs or by presenting various aspects of the family system-child relationship separately. For example, when a particular task such as establishing relationships at the level of the family unit subsystem became the focus of attention, all other identified family tasks had to be relegated to secondary positions.

When the various component parts of the family system-child relationship were presented, it was difficult to convey accurately what the totality of that relationship was really like. The pictures presented, although providing the viewer with some insight into the interior workings of the families studied, when judged at a distance, appeared to convey a somewhat artificial and myopic sense of what it was like for the young child to live inside a particular family.

Just as the family video sessions seemed to capture the subtleties of each family's interior environment more than did the audiotaped sessions, viewing the four identified family tasks at interface, instead of viewing each task separately, showed how these tasks merged to sculpture the psychosocial organization of the family system-child relationship.

The most significant discovery that resulted from presenting these four family tasks at interface was the identification of the reciprocal relationship that appeared to exist between "Iness-Weness" resolution, image development and validation, and the emergence and maintenance of subsystem profiles and family themes.

Image as a Mediating Variable.

Based upon the data presented in the Williams and Almeida families and the data collected on the other 10 families, it appeared that the central mediating task was the development and validation of images. It seemed that family member images contained the seeds out of which subsystem profiles and family themes germinated, and eventually sprung up.

The various psychosocial profiles that characterized interpersonal subsystems at times appeared to be a function of the synthesis of personal subsystem "Iness" images. Accordingly, interpersonal subsystem profiles appeared to result from the synthesis of personal subsystem images into a conjoint "Weness" subsystem image. The subsequent enactment of this subsystem image was witnessed in the identification of the particular subsystem's psychosocial profile.

When the entire family came together, the various subsystem parts and respective "Iness" and "Weness" images were transformed into a family "Weness" image. This family image was put into action via the creation and maintenance of family themes. In a sense, family themes were embodied in and grew out of family "Weness" images.

In sum, the manner in which families and family members resolved the task of being together as members of interpersonal and family unit subsystems and being separate and alone as individual subsystems appeared to be related to the development and validation of "Iness" and "Weness" images. The validation of personal subsystem images, and the particular psychobiological profiles that these images emerged from and represented, gave birth to various subsystem psychosocial profiles and family themes.

The convergence of these four family tasks, to a large degree, determined the kinds of experiences and relationships that family members were exposed to and how these experiences and relationships were interpreted. The tasks uncovered in the families studied pointed to the fact that the development of children is a function of the entire family system-child relationship.

CHAPTER X

DISCUSSION

Studying the family system-child relationship required that the researcher undertake a journey into the lives of each family. The starting point for this journey was the outer family boundary, that sometimes visible and sometimes invisible line that separated each family system-child relationship from the extrafamilial world. Gradually, as each family began to trust the intentions of the researcher, more and more information regarding each family's interior life was revealed. As more time was spent with each family, allowing family members and researcher to develop a more trusting relationship, the researcher was invited to share more fully in the intricacies of family life.

Once inside the interior life space of each family, it became apparent that the young child's family world, unlike what had been reported in most of the child development research literature, was indeed a complex phenomenon. To begin with, it was evident that the family system-child relationships studied were multidimensional biosocial systems. Unfortunately, the methodology employed in this dissertation was not sophisticated enough to uncover all of the intricate processes that were shaping the lives of children in the families studied. It was possible to conclude from the data collected, however, that existing caregiver-child conceptual frameworks that have been reported in the child development literature were not capable of unveiling nor explaining those family-level variables that in this study appeared to organize and structure the family system-child relationship. As witnessed in

this dissertation, when the family system-child relationship became the research focus, more global family-level tasks were uncovered. Parent-child focused research has traditionally uncovered more specific sets of socioeconomically related parent-child behaviors and interaction styles. Some of these behaviors and interaction styles were observed in the families studied; however, they were subsumed under more encompassing family-level tasks. Although alluded to in a few of the previously cited studies on parent-child relations, the family-level tasks identified in this study have not received much attention in the child development literature.

Definition of the Family System-Child Relationship.

In this dissertation, the family system-child relationship was defined as the young child's ongoing relationship with family members at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. The family system was observed and defined as the interface of personal subsystems, interpersonal subsystems, and the family unit subsystem. Transactions between and among children and adults were thus observed to be embedded in a multidimensional family system.

Four family-level tasks characterized the family-system child relationship. The first two tasks entailed the young child's development of relationships with family members at the level of interpersonal subsystems and at the level of the family unit subsystem. Within interpersonal and family unit subsystem relationships, two additional tasks were observed. One task was the continuous and evolving manner in which family members negotiated resolving separateness ("Iness") and connectedness ("Weness"). The remaining task was that of developing and validating

personal subsystem images.

The Four Family-Level Tasks

Interpersonal Subsystem Relationships.

The young children in the families studied were observed establishing relationships with a variety of family members at the level of interpersonal subsystems. Meaningful relationships were observed developing between the young child and parents, siblings, and grandparents, and, in some families, uncles, aunts, and cousins.

Interpersonal subsystem relationships acted as a structure within which the young child experienced various dimensions of the family system. The young child thus was afforded the opportunity to experience, to use Kantor and Lehr's (1975) conceptual framework, the dimensions of space, time, and energy to gain access to power, affect, and meaning. When viewed from a more psychodynamic perspective, interpersonal subsystem relationships provided the young child with a structure within which to experiment with autonomy, initiative, dependency, aggression, assertiveness, and a host of other psychosocial behaviors.

Psychosocial profiles. Each interpersonal subsystem relationship seemed to develop its own distinguishing psychosocial profile, a distinctive interactional style possessing a tempo and personality of its own. According to Minuchin's (1974) structural family framework, each family's subsystem configuration develops a characteristic thematic pattern of interaction or what has been termed in this study as a psychosocial profile. Psychosocial profiles were observed to embody particular interactional styles indigenous to the particular subsystem. These profiles

are synonymous with what child development researchers have termed parent teaching styles: strategic interactional styles by which parents teach their young child social and cognitive skills. Subsystem profiles, in part, determined the breadth and depth of experiences the young child was exposed to within the boundaries of interpersonal subsystems.

Psychosocial profiles emanated from the interaction of the psychobiological characteristics of each person operating in the particular subsystem relationship. Each family member's psychobiological profile seemed to entail such factors as age, sex, temperament, and developmental level. In some instances, child rearing values and expectations contributed to parental psychobiological profiles and thus helped to shape particular psychosocial profiles. In sum, the synthesis of psychobiological profiles at the level of interpersonal subsystems created what has been termed in this dissertation as a psychosocial profile.

Sex differences in profiles. At times it seemed that the manner in which parents interacted with the young child at the level of interpersonal subsystems was partly a function of the sex of both the child and the parent. In the families studied, it was as if the expectations and images that parents held of their sons and daughters were translated into different sex-linked interaction styles. Sex-linked parent-child interaction patterns have been reported elsewhere in the research literature (Cantor & Gelfand, 1977; Condry & Condry, 1976). Hess and Handel (1974) also reported that age and sex factors (biosocial differentiation process) influence the kinds of experiences afforded family members as a function of their age and sex. Different sex-linked styles were most

observable in families where there were children of both sex.

Although psychosocial profiles varied depending upon the particular subsystem the child was operating in, mother-child and father-child subsystem profiles tended to manifest some general similarities across families. As Clarke-Stewart (1978) and Lamb (1975) have observed, the father-child relationship generally manifests a different personality or interactional style than does the mother-child relationship. When compared to mothers, fathers in the families studied were observed to engage, to various degrees, in more playful and easy-going types of interactions with the young child. Mothers tended to engage in more direct teaching and caregiving behaviors than did fathers.

Change in psychosocial profiles. In some interpersonal subsystem relationships, the characteristic psychosocial profile was observed to change over time. The predominant factor underlying such change was observed to be parental response to developmental shifts in the child's personality. As Bronson (1974) has documented, parents sometimes accommodate their interaction styles and child rearing methods to behavioral changes in the child. Many times such behavioral changes in the child are associated with developmental shifts in the child's level of psychological functioning.

As the developing child passes from one developmental stage into another (e.g., infancy into toddlerhood), the psychobiological changes that accompany such a developmental shift can elicit different responses from family members. The mutual regulation that results between child and family member can result, as witnessed in this study, in transformations in psychosocial profiles. In those families where parents and

other family members were responsive to changes in the child's level of psychological functioning, relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems were also observed to change.

Summary remark. The children in the families studied were observed establishing a variety of relationships in addition to the traditionally studied mother-child relationship. The recognition of dyadic and polyadic relationships was extremely important in understanding the young child's development inside the family. This research revealed that interpersonal subsystem relationships provided the young child with "learning spaces" within which to experiment with a variety of social and cognitive skills.

Although mothers were observed to exert an important influence on the young child, the salience of this relationship was modulated by the quality and variety of other interpersonal relationships that the child established with fathers, siblings, and grandparents. In the families studied, the young child's development, as well as the development of all family members, depended, in part, on the range of social and physical experiences inherent in various relationships that evolved at the level of interpersonal subsystems.

Family Unit Subsystem Relationships.

Besides forming relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems, the young children in the families investigated also were observed establishing relationships with family members at the level of the family unit subsystem. Relationships that occur at the level of the family unit subsystem have received little attention from child development researchers. One reason for this lack of attention stems

from the fact that child development researchers have shied away from studying the young child's entire family system, focusing instead on dyadic and, to a lesser degree, triadic relationships.

However, the few previously cited studies of whole families have shown that transactions that take place at the level of the family unit subsystem take on a different style and meaning than transactions that occur at the level of interpersonal subsystems. Again, Jackson's (1965) observation that the family system is different from the sum of its parts (interpersonal subsystems) has particular significance when studying the family system-child relationship. As observed in the families studied, the young child was exposed to a different kind of experience when the entire family was present than when functioning within various interpersonal subsystems. Relationships at the level of interpersonal subsystems were imbued with a different meaning than were relationships occurring at the level of the family unit subsystem.

Family themes. Whereas interpersonal subsystem relationships were characterized by a respective psychosocial profile, interaction at the level of the family unit subsystem was monitored and organized around what has been identified as family themes. Although employing different terminology, a number of authors have stated that family system structure and function is organized around hierarchically arranged reference structures (French, 1977), themes (Hess & Handel, 1974), or meta rules (Wertheim, 1975).

While the relationship between themes and psychosocial profiles could not be clearly ascertained from the data collected, it appeared that these two variables most likely performed the same function but on

different levels. Psychosocial profiles monitored interaction that occurred at the level of interpersonal subsystems, determining the richness of experience inside dyadic and polyadic relationships. On a more abstract and panoramic level, family themes monitored interaction that occurred across the entire family unit subsystem. As such, themes monitored the types of social and physical experiences (people, places, things, and ideas) that were permitted entrance inside the family and how these people, places, things, and ideas were to be interpreted and assimilated by the child.

Themes and family typologies. Although it was not possible to state for certain, there was some evidence to support the assumption that family themes were somehow related to the development of family system typologies. Kantor and Lehr (1975) and Reiss (1971) have attempted to identify different family system typologies. Kantor and Lehr reported that family systems can manifest an open, closed or random structural arrangement. Reiss found that family systems can be classified as either reactive or active. The particular family type, in part, determines strategic styles for dealing with intra- and extrafamilial experiences. There are no pure family types; however, family systems tend to reflect one type more than another. Thus, families can be characterized, for example, as being more or less closed, open or random, or as being more reactive than active.

The families in this study were not classified according to family typology. Nevertheless, analyzing relationships at the level of the family system as being open, closed or random, reactive or active, certainly has ramifications for evaluating family system-child relationships. One can only speculate as to the types of parent-child relationships and

family experiences that take place in an open as opposed to a closed family system or in a reactive as opposed to an active family system.

Resolving "Iness" and "Weness".

Within the boundaries of interpersonal and family unit subsystem relationships, family members were observed attempting to resolve the task of "Iness" and "Weness." Family members were constantly negotiating how to be a separate personal subsystem ("Iness") while concurrently being connected to various interpersonal subsystems and the larger family unit subsystem ("Weness"). In essence, the dilemma that each family member seemed to be attempting to resolve was how to maintain and allow one's psychobiological individuality (personal subsystem profile) emerge in the form of a "self" while simultaneously renewing one's membership in the "Weness" of family system relationships.

The first occurrence of separateness and connectedness takes place when the newborn forms an attachment bond with her parents. Primary and secondary attachments are subsequently formed with a variety of family members as the child accommodates herself to members of the family system. These attachments ("Weness" relationships) enable the infant to establish a sense of "Iness," a self separate from yet connected to family members. Throughout childhood, and perhaps throughout life, the developing child gradually achieves a sense of individuation. The child gradually learns how to be an "I" and also a "We."

Hess and Handel (1974) considered separateness and connectedness to be a process central to the psychosocial organization of family life. Object relations theorists (Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975) and psychoanalytically oriented therapists (Smirnoff, 1971) have proposed that the

internalization or mapping of early familial relationships and the manner in which these relationships are cathected, are central to personality development. When viewed from the level of the family system-child relationship, the issue of separateness and connectedness appeared to underlie the manner in which the child internalized family system relationships.

Enmeshment and disengagement. Although seen from a somewhat different perspective, Minuchin (1974) has clinically documented how the process of individuation is central to family system organization and family member personality development. Minuchin reported that enmeshment occurred (too much "Weness") when there was not enough subsystem individuation. The opposite condition emerged when there was too much individuation of self apart from the family. Excessive individuation resulted in disengagement (too much "Iness" and not enough "Weness"). According to Minuchin, both enmeshment and disengagement resulted from dysfunctional family interaction patterns which, in turn, contributed to anomalies in personality development.

Reexamination of the data showed that the different calibrations of "Iness" and "Weness" to be somehow related to subsystem profiles and family themes. Each interpersonal subsystem relationship seemed to provide the young child with both a real and symbolic space within which to experience one's emerging self in relation to the selves of subsystem members. Different subsystem configurations and corresponding psychosocial profiles determined, in part, the various degrees of individuation and enmeshment that the child experienced.

For instance, when a parent or sibling tightly controlled and thus

restricted the young child's expression of autonomy and initiative, imbuing the young child's emerging "Iness" with an overabundance of "Weness," parentification or siblification of the child was likely to occur. Parentification and siblification are terms used by family clinicians to connote the child's over-identification with a dominant family member, resulting in the child's inability to differentiate his psychobiological profile from the psychobiological profile of the respective family member or to differentiate his psychobiological profile from the psychosocial profile of the subsystem. When this happens there is a tendency for malignant rather than benign collusion developing.

At the level of the family unit subsystem, separateness and connectedness appeared to be monitored in accordance with family themes. When the young child was not afforded enough psychological space to experiment with what can be termed ego differentiation, then there was a risk, to employ Bowen's (1965) term, that family projection would take place. Here, the unhealthy behaviors indigenous to the family system are transmitted to the scapegoated child. Child guidance clinics are filled with children who have been identified as the presenting problem when in fact it is the family system that contains the symptomatic behaviors. The etiology of such symptomatic behaviors may develop from a number of factors inherent in family system structure and function. The presenting problem, as manifested in the child, may emerge from dysfunctional family themes, psychosocial subsystem profiles, invalidated images, enmeshment, or disengagement. In cases where a behavior problem is observed in the child, when in fact the problem is the result of family system-child interface, the problem if viewed within the findings

of this study, can be seen as a function of the interactive effects of dysfunctional themes, psychosocial profiles, images, and/or "Iness-Weness" resolution.

Developing and Validating Images.

The final family level-task to be discussed, developing and validating personal subsystem images, appeared to be the most critical of all the tasks identified. At the level of interpersonal subsystems, personal subsystem images reflected the child's particular psychobiological profile in relation to subsystem composition. Although the image that each child developed and had validated appeared to remain fairly consistent across subsystems, subtle variations of this image were observed to occur as a function of the particular subsystem in which the child was embedded. At the level of the family unit subsystem, images appeared to sum up what it meant to be a member of a particular family. What it meant, for example, to be Linda DiMaggio as opposed to being Linda, an individual as a member of particular interpersonal subsystems. Although it was beyond the scope of this dissertation to describe intergenerational image development, in some families there was evidence that images imbued in both children and adults could be traced back two or three generations of family life.

Viewed on a different level, developing and validating images encompassed each family member's emerging sense of "Iness" and "Weness." In this light, images were seen as being related to resolving separateness and connectedness. Besides having his or her psychobiological profile summed up in an image, each family member concurrently developed

an image of who he or she was as an individual ("Iness" image) and who he or she was as a member of various interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem ("Weness" images)..

And, finally, images appeared to be related to the development of psychosocial profiles and family themes. Although the exact nature of this relationship could not be ascertained from the data collected, one possible explanation was that psychosocial profiles and family themes emerged from the synthesis of personal subsystem images. When viewed within this framework, images can be seen as providing a behavior guide for directing interaction at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem. If this assumption is accurate, then developing and validating images can be considered as a mediating variable or task, a metaphoric point in the family system-child relationship through which the other three identified tasks interfaced.

Image development sequence. In the families studied, developing and validating images was observed to follow a sequence. First, parents developed personal subsystem images of themselves from experiences in their own childhood families. These childhood images were then transformed into images of oneself as an adult. When joined to another person through marriage, these adult images were transformed into an image of self as a spouse (marital subsystem images) while still retaining an image of self as an individual (personal subsystem images). When children were born into the family, adults not only developed images of themselves as parents (parental subsystem images) but they also created and imbued each child with an image of who the child was as an individual (personal subsystem "Iness" images) and as a member of various subsystems

(interpersonal and family unit subsystems' "Weness" images).

The young child's psychosocial development inside the family appeared to be influenced by the images that each parent held for him- or herself as an individual, as a spouse, and as a parent, and the images that parents communicated to and imbued in each child. It seemed that the essential ingredient for understanding the family system-child relationship was the identification of personal subsystem images and how these images were translated into behavioral styles via the resolution of separateness and connectedness within the psychosocial geographies of interpersonal and the family unit subsystem relationships.

Kantor's family model. The task identified as developing and validating images corresponded somewhat to the image congruence process reported by Hess and Handel (1974). However, Kantor's (1979) conceptual framework of critical image identification provided the best framework for understanding this task. The findings of this study substantiated Kantor's conceptualization that validating images is probably the most important task confronting family members. Furthermore, instead of viewing separateness and connectedness and image validation as distinct tasks, as Hess and Handel did, these two tasks were observed merging via developing and validating "Iness" and "Weness" images at the levels of interpersonal and family unit subsystem relationships.

Upon reviewing the data in retrospect, Kantor's four player parts model and critical image identity framework appeared to provide a framework for understanding the four tasks that were identified in this study. Kantor's conceptualization of the four family player parts and family imagistic memory bank provided a conceptual framework for gaining deeper

insight into family interaction.

According to Kantor, members of a family, regardless of the subsystem they are operating in, can play four basic parts: mover, opposer, follower, and bystander. The mover initiates the interaction. Once interaction has been initiated, family members can oppose or challenge (e.g., offer another point of view to that proposed by the initiator of the action), follow the initiator's action or perform the bystander function by offering comments on what is happening.

Each player part is also imbued with a critical personal subsystem image. Although each family member may possess a variety of images depending upon the particular subystem he may be operating in at the moment, Kantor has proposed that each family member develops an image that is central to his or her identity inside the family. This critical image is expressed in the various player parts one performs inside the family. Critical images imbue family life with meaning and purpose, acting as behavior guides for directing interaction.

At the level of the family system, images, that is some instances span three to four generations, are collectively stored in what Kantor termed the family's imagistic memory bank. This imagistic memory bank contains the blueprint, comparable to a genetic code, of the family's psychosocial history. To quote Kantor and Lehr (1975), "Indeed, each family's social future is shaped as much by its central meanings and images as each individual's biological development is shaped by his or her genetic makeup" (p. 241).

Thus, as the child grows into an adult and subsequently leaves her family to start a family of her own, she carries with her, unconsciously

or consciously, an imagistic sense of what to expect from family life and how to interact in a family, in a sense how to be a spouse and a parent. Over time, her own family will develop its own imagistic memory bank, a memory bank which contains remnants of images from her and her spouse's childhoods as well as new images created through the formation of their own family. Her children will in turn be imbued with the images stored in their family's imagistic memory bank and thus the images spaning three generations, although somewhat modified, will be transmitted from one generation to the next.

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The four family-level tasks identified from the ecological study of 12 non-clinic families provides a different perspective for describing and evaluating the family system-child relationship than what has been previously reported in the child development literature. Although this study was descriptive, at certain points in the presentation of the findings evaluations of the family system-child relationship were made exclusively for the purpose of clarifying particular family-level tasks. However, there is a real danger in making evaluations of families, especially when evaluations are made without a thorough understanding of the function that certain variables play in organizing family life.

Evaluating Child Rearing Environments.

A primary concern for child development researchers has been to evaluate the quality of parenting, to differentiate enriching from deleterious child rearing environments. In some instances such evaluations have been helpful in identifying the variety and quality of caretaking environments in which young children are being reared. However, research findings such as those reported by White (1975) have been interpreted as being conclusive, as being a blueprint to follow for rearing competent children. Unfortunately, some educators and clinicians have constructed parenting programs based entirely on what has been reported in the psychological research as being the best way to rear cognitively competent and emotionally healthy children.

Family measurement instruments. In an attempt to evaluate child rearing environments, a limited number of measuring instruments such as HOME (Elardo, Bradley & Caldwell, 1975) and the Adult Assessment Scale (White, 1975) have been developed. These instruments are designed to systematically collect data on the caregiver-child relationship and on the family environment. HOME has been the most widely used of home environment measurement instruments in child development research. Subscales on HOME have been reported to identify those home environments and mother-child relationships in which there exists a severe lack of social and physical stimulation.

In this study, HOME was scored following the first mother-child observation. Unfortunately, the information obtained by administering HOME was very limited. Even in the case of the one family, the St. Annes, in which the HOME score, when compared to the other families in the study, was quite low, scores on HOME were misleading and failed to provide an accurate picture of the breadth and depth of experiences the young child was exposed to inside the family.

Parent education. In most parent education programs, parental child rearing methods are constantly being assessed. Underlying the increasing number of parent education programs that have emerged over the past decade are a variety of assumptions concerning the proper way to rear children. The primary goal of most parenting programs is to assist parents, usually mothers, in developing more effective child rearing skills. Depending on the philosophy of the program, parents are exposed to alternative strategies for nurturing cognitive and affective competencies in their children. It appears that most of the current parenting programs such

as Parent Effectiveness Training (Gordon, 1970), Adlerian Child Management (Dreikurs, 1964), and Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (Dinkmyer & McKay, 1973) propose a "right" and a "wrong" way to rear children.

The data collected from parenting programs and from home environment research have undoubtedly contributed to the knowledge base on the effects that families have on the young child's development. Instruments such as HOME have been very helpful in assisting researchers in identifying depriving child rearing environments. Parent education programs continue to offer mothers a support system in which to discuss issues pertinent to their child's development.

However, a major criticism of current home assessment instruments and parent education curricula is that they fail to view the young child's development as a function of the family system, instead viewing the child's development within a myopic, matriocentric framework. Such instruments and programs are child focused rather than family system-child focused, and are built upon a mechanistic view of the family rather than upon a more organismic, family systems perspective. Parenting programs and family assessment instruments fail to take into consideration that the young child functions within a complex social system in which parts of this system (e.g., relationships at the levels of interpersonal subsystems and the family unit subsystem) converge on the young child and thus cumulatively influence the young child's psychosocial as well as cognitive development. What was observed in this study, but which is not evident in present measuring instruments and parenting programs, was that the child's development is a function of the family system rather

than simply a function of dyadic relationships.

Evaluating the Family System-Child Relationship.

As noted above, family assessment instruments and parent education programs tend to view the family system-child relationship within a dyadic, primary caregiver-child framework. As a result, most evaluations of the child's family have, for the most part, been made from one-time assessments of the mother-child relationship. As was witnessed in this study, even when naturalistic observations were conducted over an extended period of time with the entire family, it was still very difficult to make evaluative statements about the quality of particular family system-child relationships and to predict the impact these relationships were having on the child's development. Nevertheless, some limited evaluations were made concerning the observer's judgement of how the four tasks were being handled in certain families.

Further reflection on the data and follow-up sessions with the families pointed out how difficult it really is to evaluate certain dimensions of the family system-child relationship without considering the function that a particular task or process has for the maintenance of the family system. Such an observation lends support to the principle that the family system (the whole) is different from the sum of its parts.

A case in point was the task of resolving "Iness" and "Neness." As described in Chapter VII, the data presented clearly showed that in the Nazareth family, as opposed to the Mason family, there was a tendency for family members to become enmeshed at the levels of interpersonal subsystems, especially the mother-child subsystem, and the family unit

subsystem. It appeared that family members, especially Luke and John, were prevented from experiencing "Iness" apart from family "Weness."

If viewed from a more traditional psychodynamic rather than from a family systems perspective, it could be rightfully argued that Luke and John were both enmeshed in a somewhat dysfunctional family environment. However, when seen from a family-level instead of an acontextual and individual perspective, the manner in which the Nazareths were handling the task of separateness and connectedness and the family themes that had emerged, may have been appropriate for the maintenance of the Nazareth family system-child relationship.

Considering the psychosocial histories of Mr. and Mrs. Nazareth and the fact that the Nazareths were barely making ends meet financially, forcing them to live in a changing urban environment where crime and violence were on the increase, the emphasis upon "family Weness" and the central role religion played on the lives of family members takes on an entirely different meaning. It was as if the manner in which family members were dealing with the four identified tasks enabled this family to survive without seriously jeopardizing the development of its members. Follow-up school reports, for example, indicated that John and Luke were performing at grade level. John's kindergarten teacher reported that John was functioning normally both cognitively and emotionally.

What became apparent in this study and as illustrated in the Nazareth family, was that the long term effects that the family system has on the developing child can only be ascertained from longitudinal investigations and from viewing the wider ecological context in which

the family system-child relationship is embedded. Families, like individuals, are capable of accommodating to the most austere ecological conditions so as to ensure for the survival of its members.

Too often, clinicians and educators, unfamiliar with how families operate as systems, unintentionally make interventions into a family that may seriously endanger present family system equilibrium and thus interfere with the family's readiness to change according to the family's internal time schedule. A valuable lesson learned from the time spent studying families was that whether involved in research, clinical, or educational work with families, the researcher, clinician, or educator must move slowly and constantly be aware of what a behavior, a symptom, or an intervention ultimately means in the context of the family system.

Two guidelines mentioned by Framo (1979) for evaluating the young child's family system received some support from the data collected in this study. The first concerns the fact that normal and abnormal behavior in family members is defined by and receives meaning from the family system and thus can only be evaluated and interpreted in relation to the function such behavior performs in maintaining the family system. The other guideline pertains to the finding that family systems tend to mold individual family member behavior to fit the needs and themes of the family. As such, the child's development can best be understood and interpreted by analyzing the family system and wider ecological systems in which the child and family are embedded.

Concluding Remarks.

The four family-level tasks uncovered in this study appear to have

some relevance to the findings reported in the few existing studies of the family system. These findings also seem to have some value for constructing family assessment instruments and in developing parent education programs. Nevertheless, the findings reported in this study must be viewed with caution because of the vast number of limitations contained in the methodology employed.

To begin with, the small sample size and the preponderance of families from Italian American and Roman Catholic backgrounds limits generalizing the findings to families representing other ethnic and religious backgrounds. For example, non-white and non-Christian families were not represented in the population studied.

There were a number of limitations in the methodology. The data were collected by one individual, not by a team of researchers, thus making appropriate inter-rater reliability impossible. Although his procedures increased rapport with the families, the findings presented were based entirely upon one researcher's observations and his interpretations of these observations. In addition, there was no attempt to complement naturalistic observations with standardized projective measures of personality development. The utilization of such a dual methodology might have uncovered an entirely different set of family-level variables than the ones reported.

The data collected were interpreted according to a family-level perspective. This level of analysis contradicts a more traditional psychodynamic framework for interpreting family life. Selecting a different theoretical framework for data analysis (e.g., psychoanalytical or social behavior theory) most certainly would have resulted in quite

different findings.

Although the data collected and the findings reported represented an attempt to conduct ecological research on the family system-child relationship, more questions concerning this relationship were raised than answered. Such issues as the effects that marital satisfaction, sibling relations, and the extended network of family relationships were having on the young child's development needed to be explored in more depth than was possible in this study.

Another important ecological variable that was beyond the scope of this dissertation but nevertheless observed to be important, was the direct and indirect influence that personal social networks of children (e.g., peer system, school system) and adults (e.g., work system, friendship system) had on family life and the development of children and adults. It became apparent that all of these micro- and mesosystem relationships, not to mention the physical characteristics of the home and neighborhood, must be taken into account if researchers hope to develop an ecology of childhood.

Lastly, the four identified tasks need to be quantified and verified as to their importance in organizing the family system-child relationship in a variety of family forms other than the ones studied in this dissertation. Such a task will require more in depth research on a larger and more diversified sample of families.

Researchers who intend to conduct ecological research on the social worlds of childhood will be required to find better ways of combining naturalistic with experimental research techniques. In this dissertation both types of techniques were instrumental in uncovering family-level data.

Future research endeavors might find it useful to explore the relative effectiveness of employing a variety of naturalistic, task oriented, and projective data collection methods when studying whole families. Devising new research methodologies hopefully will improve the seeking process, enabling researchers to gain deeper insights into the determinants of child development.

However, even though new and more sophisticated methodologies might facilitate the research process, studying whole families still will require that researchers expend an inordinate amount of time and energy investigating family life as it occurs naturalistically inside families. Studying human development as it unfolds inside families entails that researchers embark upon a long and arduous journey into the lives of children and parents. But the journey's end may well lead to significant discoveries concerning how families sculpt the development of children.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

FAMILY INTERVIEW FACE SHEET

1. Ages of all family members living in household.

Name	Age	Relationship	D.O.B.

2. Number of years couple has been married: _____

3. Family's residence history.

Location	Rent/Own	How Long	Comment

4. Ethnic background of adults living in household.

Name	Ethnic Origins	Language Spoken

5. Grandparents

Name	Living/Deceased	Present Residence

6. Religious Affiliation

Name	Affiliation	Intensity

7. Brief description of household.

8. Education of adults living in household.

Name	# Years of School	Degree

9. Current and previous occupations of adults living in household.

Name	Type of Work	# Years at Job

10. Name of preschool or playgroup children attend.

Name	School	How Long/Grade

11. The following questions to be asked as appropriate.

A. What are your present concerns about your child and/or family?

B. What experiences (outside of your family) have you had with children?

C. What materials (e.g., books, newspapers, articles, etc.) have you read that are helpful to you in caring for your children?

D. What has been the most helpful source of information about children and family life?

E. Early life of parents.

Description of childhood

Description of parents

Description of siblings

General comment on what childhood and home life was like

Courtship of husband and wife.

F. Are there any other facts or pertinent information that has been left out concerning any aspect of your family life?

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

DRAWING OF THE FAMILY LIFE SPACE: A NETWORK OF PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

1. Begin by thinking about the people who exert an influence on your family relationships. These people may include both people inside your family (family members) as well as people or groups outside of your family (persons in the Head Start center, your boss at work, a neighbor, a friend, etc.). Make a list of these important people or groups of people.

Remember, choose these people because they exert a powerful and important influence on your life and on your family's life. Their influence may be positive or negative, strong or weak, direct or indirect. However, the important thing is that from your point of view you consider these people to figure into your life and in the network of your family relationships in a real and significant way.

These are the people or groups who immediately come to mind when you think about your family and your day-to-day routines and activities. In one way or another, these people are part of your life. These people play an important part in your life.

2. Make a list of these people as they come to mind. Just rely on what first comes to mind. Don't analyze too much. No network is ever a definitive, final or complete picture. Networks change. This is what always seems to make this activity so much fun!

3. Take a blank sheet of paper. Imagine that this blank sheet of paper is the world. Imagine that all this empty space is yours. You are the

architect or designer. On this paper you will construct a drawing that shows how you see relationships between/among important people in your life.

4. First, draw a figure that stands for your family. What is inside this figure will represent the inside family world. What is outside this figure will represent the world outside your family.

As you will see, some family members get placed outside the family (e.g., the truant child, the estranged or divorced spouse) while non-family members sometimes find themselves place inside the family (e.g., a close friend of the family, the boss at work who dad always seems to "bring home with him" in one way, shape or form -- dad eats, sleeps, lives his work and can't seem to talk about anything else).

5. Now that you have drawn the family figure, the figure acting as a boundary to indicate where the inside family world begins and ends and where the outside world begins or "takes over," start putting your people in. Begin to arrange people. Show the relationships. Place people anywhere you please. Don't worry about being factual.

Fact: My brother is part of my family; he lives in with us.

How I feel: My brother is often very distant, a stranger to us. This makes me want to place him outside the family. What should I do?

Drawing: If you feel that he is outside of your family life, place him, brother or not, outside of the family in your network drawing.

6. Continue to arrange the people. Connect them. Continue the network until you have placed and connected all the people in your original list, or until you are satisfied with the network you have drawn.

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

Scores on HOME

Scores on HOME for children under the age of 3. Maximum score is 45.

Name	Score
Jimmy Fisher	42
Lori Mason	42
R.J. Waverly	35
Linda DiMaggio	40
Janice L'Campion	37
Tommy Lancer	44
Marty Cabana	35

Scores on HOME for children between the ages of 3 and 5. Maximum score is 80.

Name	Score
Jamie Lancer	78
Robbie Mason	78
Carl Fisher	76
Patti L'Campion	71
Floyd Builder	71
Jennifer Waverly	68
John Nazareth	63
Eddy St. Anne	48
Steve Cabana	67
Anthony Almeida	67
Judy Almeida	67
Kathy Williams	78